THE BRAHMANAS OF INDIA

a study based on inscriptions

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CHITRAREKHA GUPTA

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PREFACE

The brāhmaṇas held the highest position in society under the religious system rooted in the Vedas. But Buddhism and Jainism offered a challenge to the sacrificial religion of the Vedas, in which lay in power of the brāhmaṇas. The gradual popularity of the semi-Vedic religious systems like Vaishṇavism, Śaivism etc. also "created an atmosphere which did not, in an orthodox way, conform to Vedic or Brahmanical ideas." The situation was further aggravated by the advent of the casteless foreigners like the Greeks, Śakas, Kushāṇas and others. The supremacy of the non-kshatriyas in political field also posed problem to the orthodox brāhmaṇas. Expansion in trade and commerce meant accumulation of money in the hands of those inferior caste who also tried to "move up the scale." All these forces acting simultaneously created a society which was not at all favourable for orthodox brāhmaṇism.

The orthodox yānīka brāhmaṇas gradually succumbed to the social pressures and there was a continuous fall in their number. The liberal section of the brāhmaṇas, who were mostly followers of the semi-Vedic systems of religion, however, realized that in this situation they would have to move very cautiously and intelligently. They should not antagonize the influential section of the society, which would then strengthen the hands of the anti-Vedic sects, but should at the same time try to re-establish the authority of the Veda, the *Varṇāśrama-dharma* and the other moral rules. These were by no means easy tasks. The *Śāstrakāras* on the one hand set up a high ideal of life for the brāhmaṇas, which was likely to earn the reverence of the people at large; while on the other hand, in the practical field they made rapproachment with the powerful and moneyed men of the society and they themselves tried to acquire power and money to stand at par with their opponents.

So far as the ideal of brāhmaṇism was concerned, a brāhmaṇa was required to devote to the six-fold duties throughout his life. He was required to study the Vedas and other approved subjects of study and teach the same to persons eligible to be taught. He was required to perform sacrifices for the benefit of the society and help the eligible persons in their performance of ritualistic duties. He could accept gifts from proper persons to ensure the increase of merits of the donors; yet, he was not to be greedy, and he was supposed to dispose of his wealth as gifts to others, keeping for himself only what was his bare necessity. The brāhmaṇas, however, adopted and abandoned these rules and régulations so as to suit them keeping in view the need of the dynamic society, and, naturally there was a gap in theory and practice.

With the loss of popularity of Vedic sacrifices it became necessary for the brāhmāṇas to adopt new professions for their livelihood. They now began to study many subjects which were not approved by the orthodox law makers and accepted many professions associated with their new branches of knowledge. Those who could not make money in any other way had to depend on gifts, and the high ideal behind it could hardly be retained. Thus, though all the brāhmaṇas were required to be *shaṭ-karma-nirata*, the concept had no concrete connotation, and, in the practical field the rules laid for them fluctuated in time and space.

In this book an attempt has been made to show how the brāhmaṇas penetrated into different fields of activities, a quality which contributed to their coming back to power. It has also been intended to point out that though all the brāhmaṇas were required to be *shaṭ-karma-nirata* they were not a homogeneous class and were divided into various groups and sub-groups. It has also been suggested that once the brāhmaṇas came back to power, they made no conscious attempt to avert the symptoms of decadence which were noticed in the mediaeval social structure. Perhaps they did not want the wheel to move, in their own interest. They were as much products of a crippled society as they were instrumental in making it so.

PREFACE

In this study I have taken inscriptions as my primary source, because as a student of archaeology I attach more value to the material objects of the past, which throw light on the life of the then contemporary people. I have rather not depended too much on literature, as literature perhaps leaves scope of later interpretation and interpolation, if not of idealistic representation. But I have depended on sources from literature to clarify many points known from epigraphs. Whenever possible I have taken help from anthropological works to bridge the gap between the past and the present.

It is a vast study and I confess frankly that I have not been able to do full justice to the subject, and, possibly the brāhmaṇas of northern India have featured more prominently on the analysis. There is also scope for detailed study on each of the chapters I have dealt with. In fact, I started this work as a background study of my more ambitious research project on the historio-anthropological analysis of the brāhmaṇas of Bengal. I started to read the inscriptions of different parts of India to make a comparison of the brāhmaṇas of Bengal with those of the other regions. But as my study progressed I found that an important and interesting, though preliminary, work can be done on the data collected by me. So I crave the indulgence of my readers for omissions which I may have made, but I stand responsible for errors, if any, in the analysis presented herein.

Chitrarekha Gupta

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Chitrarekha Gupta

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1

THE VEDAS AND THE BRAHMANAS

The Vedas are four in number—Ṛik, Sāma, Yaju and Atharva. Each and every brāhmaṇa had to learn at least one of these Vedas and then according to one's capacity mastered two, three or all of them and came to be called Dvivedī, Trivedī or Chaturvedī. Thus in the inscriptions the brāhmaṇas are sometimes introduced as *Śrī Rikvedacharaṇe Chaturvedin*, *Śrī Yajurvedacharaṇe Chaturvedin*, *Śrī Chhandogacharaṇe Tripaṁti* or *Śrī Atharvacharaṇe Dvivedin*.[1] This '*charaṇa*' affilation was "one of the items of a Brāhmaṇa's identification and specification."[2]

In view of controversies over the dates of Indian literature and due to paucity of epigraphical materials before the time of the Guptas, it is difficult to be definite as to the date when such specialisations became normal. Two Śālaṁkāyana inscriptions of the 3rd century A.D. speak of a community of brāhmaṇas of the Chaturvedī class who resided in the Rathakāra *agrahāra*.[3] That the grouping of the brāhmaṇas as Chaturvedī, Trivedī etc. became quite widespread long before the Gupta period is suggested by two inscriptions, which are, interestingly enough, Buddhist in character. A mutilated Junnar inscription (2nd century A.D.) refers to Thera Sula and his disciple Thera Chetiya, who were Tevidyas.[4] According to the *Aṁguttara-Nikāya* (I. 164. SI) Tevijja or Traividya is he who possessed the three fold knowledge, viz., (1) remembrance of former births, (2) insight into the future destiny of all beings and (3) recognition of the origin of misery and of the way of its removal (i.e. of the Path).[5] One Mathura inscription (2nd century A.D.) records the gift of a monk, named Buddhiśreshṭha, who has been called a Chāturvidya.[6] The term is not found in any Pali text, but Lüders[7] while commenting on the term suggests that, he who had "the knowledge of the 4 Āgams of the Buddhist canon — the Dīrgha, Madhyama, Saṁyukta and Ekottara Āgama," was possibly known as a Chāturvidya. These inscriptions leave no doubt that the Buddhists were influenced and inspired in these respects by the brāhmaṇical terms Trivedī and Chaturvedī which were very common at the time when these inscriptions were written.

Each of the Vedas had various śākhās, based on the interpretations of eminent authorities, and the brāhmaṇas were also introduced by the special branch of the Veda to which he was attached. For example, Devavishṇu, a Chaturvedī is said to have belonged to the Rāṇāyaṇīya śākhā of the Sāmaveda.[8] Govindaḷi, a Dvivedī, was a student of the Taittirīya śākhā of the Kṛishṇa-Yajurveda.[9] Even when a brāhmaṇa studied more than one Veda, he actually carried on the religious rites in accordance with the rules laid down in the particular śākhā of the Veda to which his ancestors were attached. He who did not study the Vedic śākhā of his family and studied another was called a *śākhāraṇḍa*. All religious rites performed according to the procedure and *mantras* of another śākhā became fruitless. If only some religious rites were omitted in one's own śākhā, but were mentioned in another and which did not come in conflict with one's own branch, these were allowed to be performed.[10] Most of the brāhmaṇas receiving land grants from the kings were, however, persons of normal calibre, who studied only the family śākhā. Some valuable information about the Vedas and their śākhās may be gathered from a survey of these inscriptions.

In case of the Ṛigvedī brāhmaṇa generally no śākhā is found to be mentioned. It is simply said that he belonged to the Ṛigveda or to the Bahvṛichacharaṇa.[11] This non-mention of the śākhā probably indicates that though several śākhās of this Veda are known to have existed, only one śākhā was popular, at least in early period. The most important śākhā of the Ṛigvedā was the Āśvalāyana śākhā, which was widely read all over India. To give only a few examples — The Kaira plates of Dadda II speak of six brāhmaṇas of Vatsa gotra who were students of the Āśvalāyana śākhā of the Ṛigvedā.[12] Daulatpura plates of the Gurjjara-Pratihāra king Bhojadeva I record the grant of lands in favour of brāhmaṇas of Āśvalāyana śākhā.[13] Samantasar (Faridpur Dist.) copper-plate of Harivarman speaks of a donee belonging to this śākhā.[14] The Barrackpur copper-plate of Vijayasena refers to the donee Udayakaradevaśarman, an emigrant from Madhyadeśa who was a student of this śākhā.[15] Sundarban copper-plate of Lakshmaṇasena records the grant of land in favour of Śāntyāgārika Kṛishṇadharadevaśarman of Gargya gotra, and student of the Āśvalāyana śākhā.[16]

Of the other śākhās the Śākala śākhā has been referred to in the inscriptions of Orissa belonging to 13th century. The Alalpur and Kendupatna plates of Narasiṁha II (13th cent.) refer to one Allanātha Senāpati who belonged to the Pūtimāsha gotra and was a student of the Śākala śākhā of the Ṛig Veda.[17] It is interesting to note that the modern Ṛigvedī brāhmaṇas mostly use the Śākala Saṁhitā.

The existence of the Śāṁkhāyana branch of the Ṛig Veda is also attested by inscriptions. The Mandhata plates of Devapāla refer to the brāhmaṇa donee Purushottamaśarman of Gautama gotra as belonging to the Śāṁkhāyana śākhā.[18] This family hailed from Ḍiṁḍvānakasthāna, identified with Didwan in Jodhpur state of Rajasthan.

Of the Sāmaveda or the Chhandoga charaṇa two śākhās, Kauthuma and Rāṇāyaṇīya are referred to in inscriptions. The former śākhā was very popular and brāhmaṇas of this śākhā are found all over Northern India, including Western and Eastern India.[19] References to the Rāṇāyaṇīya śākhā are not so common. Indor copper-plate of the time of Skandagupta speaks of brāhmaṇa Devavishṇu who belonged to the Rāṇāyaṇīya śākhā.[20] Mummunirāja (11th cent.) granted lands in favour of twelve brāhmaṇas, who emigrated from different parts of India. One of the donees Nārāyaṇa, son of Dāmodara Upādhyāya was a student of the Rāṇāyaṇīya śākhā. The donee hailed from Bhṛigukachchha in Lātadeśa.[21] Mandhata copper-plates of Devapāla record the grant of lands among other donees, to Kuladharaśarman and Madhusūdanaśarman of Bharadvāja gotra, who were students of the Rāṇāyaṇīya śākhā. Both of them hailed from Mathura.[22]

The Yajurveda was divided in two groups -- Śukla and Kṛishṇa, with their realm of influence being, generally speaking, in the north and south of the Vindhya. The Śukla Yajurveda of the Vājasaneya charaṇa had two śākhās — Kāṇva[23] and Mādhyandina,[24] both of which were every popular and little differed from each other. Consequently the brāhmaṇas are sometimes said to have belonged to the Kāṇva —Mādhyandina śākhā.[25]

Of the different branches of Kṛishṇa Yajurveda the Taittirīya śākhā was the most popular one, particularly in the South.[26] But Patañjali suggests that at one time the Kaṭha and the Kalāpa or Maitrāyaṇī śākhās were well-known schools of the Yajurveda.[27] The Rāmāyaṇa speaks of their importance in Northern India.[28] Epigraphic references to these śākhās are also not lacking. Palitana plates of Siṁhāditya speaks of Bappasvāmi, a student of the Maitrāyaṅīya śākhā.[29] The Eran stone pillar inscription of Budhagupta speaks of Mātṛivishṇu, who was a feudatary of the Guptas, to have belonged to the Maitrāyaṇīya śākhā.[30] Kanas plates of Lokavigraha and Bhānudatta record grants of lands in favour of a *maṭha* for the maintenance of the god and of the brāhmaṇas of different gotras who were students of the Maitrāyaṇīya branch of the Yajurveda.[31] References to Kaṭha-śākhā are also common in inscriptions. The Khoh copper-plate of Hastin refers among the brāhmaṇa donces one Kumāradeva of Vāsula gotra, who was a student of the Kaṭha śākhā.[32] The Mandhata copper-plate of Devapāla speaks of Chaturvedī Alliśarman of Hārīta-Kutsa gotra, who came from Sarasvatī sthāna, and was a student of the Kaṭha śākhā[33]. Indian Museum plate of the Gaṅga king Devendravarman records the grant of lands in favour of a donee of this śākhā, who hailed from Uttara—Rāḍha of Bengal.[34] In the Nidhanpura copper-plates of Bhāskaravarman,[35] where a long list of brāhmaṇa donees are found, the donees are referred to as students of the Bahvṛicha, Chhandogya or Vājasaneya charaṇa. But there are only five cases where the particular śākhās are mentioned.

Śivaganasvāmi belonged to the Taittirīya śākhā, while Sādhusvāmi, Kushmāndyapatrasvāmī, Īśvaradattasvāmi and Chandrapakshasvāmi were students of the Charaka śākhā. The non-mention of such śākhās in other cases probably indicates that all the Ṛigvedīs, Sāmavedīs and Yajurvedīs belonged to the same śākhā which was popularly associated with the respective Veda in that locality; and only those who differed deserved particular mention. The Bonda copper-plates of Mahāśiva Tivara record the grant of lands to several brāhmaṇas, who have been introduced as *Yajurveda-Sāmaveda-Charak-Addhvaryyu-Maitrāyaṇīya bhaṭṭa.*[36] Here two branches of the Kṛishṇa-Yajurveda, Charaka and Maitrāyaṇī have been mentioned by name. But it is difficult to say what was the Addhvaryyu śākhā or which special branches of the Yajurveda and Sāmaveda were meant by these generic terms. It may be mentioned in this connection that the brāhmaṇas of Charaka śākhā have almost disappeared, though literature, inscriptions and seals would suggest that at one time it was an important branch of the Yajurveda. The earliest epigraphic reference to the word Charaka may be found in the Nasik cave inscription of Ushabhadāta, the son-in-law of Nahapāna. Large donations were made by Ushabhadāta to different *tirthas* of Western India and also to the congregation of the Charakas stationed in Rāmatīrtha at Sorpāraga (modern Sopara).[37] The word Charaka referred to the mendicant ascetics. In the Allahabad Yūpa inscription also reference has been made to donations in favour of an alm-house attached to a Śiva temple for the benefit of the Charakas.[38] These two inscriptions make it clear that the Charakas were quite popular. But it is difficult to say whether these wandering ascetics had anything to do with the Charaka śākhā of the Yajurveda. The Charaka śākhā is taken as a branch of the Kṛishṇa-Yajurveda, which had its realm of influence in the South, but the earliest written archaeological documents of this branch come from the North. We have found from Rajghat a seal bearing the name of the Charaka śākhā.[39] Thus there was at Benares a college to impart lessons in the Charaka śākhā also as there were for other branches of the Vedas. The Bonda copper-plate of Mahāśiva Tivara, referred to above, suggests that the brāhmaṇas of Charaka śākhā could be found at one time in Madhya Pradesh. The

Nidhanpur copper-plates of Bhāskaravarman show that the brāhmaṇas of this śākhā were well known even upto the 7th centuryA.D. But how these brāhmaṇas of Charaka śākhā lost their importance and gradually become extinct can not be answered at the present state of our knowledge. Sherring noted that according to some of the Maharashtriya brāhmaṇas brāhmaṇas are divided into various groups, one of them being Charak.[40] Unfortunately we have no detail information about these Charaks and we cannot say that they are the followers of the Charaka śākhā.

Similarly, the Raipur copper-plate of Mahāsudevarāja[41] has brought to light a brāhmaṇical family, following a comparatively unknown śākhā of the Kṛishṇa Yajurveda. It speaks of two donees Bandhuvatsasvāmin and Nāgavatsasvamin, who belonged to the Vatsa gotra and were students of the Aupamanyava śākhā. The name of this śākhā is not found in common literature associated with the Kṛishṇa Yajurveda. Raghu Vira on the basis of different Purāṇas, Charaṇavyuhas etc. has drawn a tree of the Yajurveda with its 101 branches. There the name of the Aupamanyava śākhā is found to be associated with the Kṛishṇa Yajurveda. It connects the brāhmaṇas of the Aupamanyava śākhā with Krauñchadvīpa.[42]

Of the different branches of the Atharvaveda only two, Śaunakīya and Paippalāda have so far been traced. Epigraphic evidence shows that the Paippalāda śākhā was the most important branch of this Veda. In the Ahmedabad—Pune region there exists a group of brāhmaṇa who call themselves Śaunaka—Paippalādins. Many of them consider themselves as Paippalādins but recite the Śaunaka *mantras*, suggesting thereby that the Śaunaka śākhā was of general use in this region, but with the popularity of the Paippalāda school they came to associate their names with this śākhā. Some Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas of the Paippalāda school have also been traced in Orissa.[43]

Sometimes instead of the śākhā, the particular sūtra to which the brāhmaṇa is attached is referred to in the inscriptions, especially in those of Southern India. The inscription of Devaraya II refers to a brāhmaṇa, who belonged to the Āśvalāyana sūtra of the Ṛigveda.[44] A Valabhi grant of Dharasena II records the gift of some lands etc. to brāhmaṇa Rudra, who is described as a student of the Maitrāyanīya-Vārāhaka śākhā.[45] The Lohner grant of the Chālukya king Pulakeśin II refers to a brāhmaṇa donee, who originally hailed from Girinagara (Girnar), but resided at Lohanagara (Lohner in Nasik dist.), as belonging to the Vārāhaka sūtra.[46] The Vunna Guravayapalem plates of Pallava king Parameśvaravarman I refers to the donee Devaśarman as belonging to the Āpastamba sūtra of the Taittirīya śākhā.[47] The donee of the Koneki grant of Vishṇuvardhana II was also attached to the Āpastamba sūtra.[48] The Tundigrama grant of Vikramendra III, the Vishṇukundin king, speaks of Svāmiśarman, a student of the same sūtra.[49] The Ipur plates of Vishṇuvardhana III refers to one Agniśarman following the Hiraṇyakeśī sūtra, also belonging to the Taittirīya śākhā.[50] The Pullur plates of Nandīvarman II Pallavamalla[51] record the grant of lands in favour of 108 brāhmaṇas. The donees are mentioned with reference to their respective gotras, sūtras and grāmas. Of the donees whose names can be read out in the inscription 58 belonged to the Āpastamba sūtra, which was the most popular sūtra in the south, 21 donees were attached to the Pravachana sūtra, 7 to the Hiraṇyakeśī sūtra, 4 to the Chhandoga sūtra, and 3 to the Vāseṇi sūtra. Unamanjeri Plates of Achyutarāya of Vijayanagara[52] record the grant of land in favour of 48 brāhmaṇas, six of whom are said to have belonged to the Drāhyāyaṇa sūtra and one to the Āpastamta sūtra. Sūtras of other donees have not been given. Drāhyāyaṇasūtra is the sūtra of the Rāṇāyaṇīya śākhā of the Sāmaveda. Kuniyur plates of Venkaṭa II refers to brāhmaṇa donees belonging to the Āśvalāyana, Āpastamba, Baudhāyana, Jaimiṇī and Satyāshāḍha sūtras.[53] Jaiminīya sūtra apparently is the sūtra of the Jaiminīya śākhā of the Sāmaveda. Satyāshāḍa sūtra is another name of the Hiraṇyakeśī sūtra.

Of these sūtras, referred to in the inscriptions, some are well known. But I could not definitely connect the Chhandoga, and Vāseṇi sūtras with their respective Vedic śākhās. In the inscriptions also these sūtras are not frequently referred to. But there are several inscriptions referring to the brāhmaṇas of the Pravachana sūtra. That it was a sūtra of the Taittirīya śākhā is clearly indicated by the Udayendiram plates of Pallava king Nandivarman, which records the grant of land in favour of Kulaśarman of Kauśika gotra, a student of the Taittirīya śākhā and Pravachana sūtra.[54] This sūtra was very popular in Tamil land and many of the donees receiving land grants from the Pallava kings were attached to this sūtra. Solapuram inscription of Vijaya-kampa (9th cent.) records the name of the donee Tittaiśarman of Kauśika gotra who was attached to this sūtra.[55] Rayakota plates of Pallava Skandaśishya speak of Mādhavaśarma-bhaṭṭa of Vatsa gotra and of this sūtra.[56] Nandivarman Pallavamalla on one occasion granted lands to 108 brāhmaṇas and we have already noted that 21 of them were followers of the Pravachana sūtra.[57] Bühler has pointed out that Pravachana-sūtra in all probability was the name of the sūtra of Baudhāyana. In the *Baudhāyana Gṛihyasūtra* IV. 8. Kaṇva Baudhāyana has been described as the author of the *Pravachana.* Bühler says that the title *Pravachanakāra* given to Baudhāyana suggests that he was "the first expounder of the *kalpa* among the Taittirīyavedins" and was thus considered as "something more than a common *sūtrakāra*". Baudhāyana has been mentioned as the first *sūtrakāra* of the Taittirīya śākhā by Māhadeva, the commentator of the Hiraṇyakeśī sūtra of the same śākhā.[58]

As it has been already noted, any brāhmaṇa belonging to any Veda could become a Dvivedī, Trivedī or Chaturvedī. There are ample epigraphic evidence to show that in the same family there were persons of different educational acumen. The Maitraka king Dhruvasena II granted lands to two brāhmaṇas-Dattasvāmin and Kumārasvāmin. The former was a Trivedī and the latter was a Chaturvedī. Both of them, however, were sons of one Buddhasvāmin.[59] The Semra copper-plates of Paramardideva speak of Chaturvedī Gautama and Chaturvedī Vahula who were sons of Dvivedī Avasara and Dvivedī Nārāyaṇa respectively. Dvidedi Somesvara, on the contrary, was the son of Chaturvedī Lāhada.[60] Such cases may be multiplied.

But usually the son tried to follow the foot steps of the father and thus traditions of scholasticity grew up in a family. Vāmasārman, his father Devaśarman and grand father Śrīvatsaśarman referred to in the Mandhata plates of Jayasiṁha-Jayavarman were all Dvivedīs.[61] Similar are the cases with Nārāyaṇaśarman, Rāmaśarman and Gadādharaśarman, mentioned in the Mandhata-plates of Devapāla.[62] Nārāyaṇaśarman, his father Dāmodaraśarman and his grandfather Samudradharaśarman, referred to in the Mandhata-plates of Jayasiṁha Jayavarman were all Trivedīs. Same is the case with another donee Vāūṁśarman.[63] The Mandhata copper-plates of Devapāla refer to Trivedī Suraśarman, Viśveśvaraśarman, Kuladharśarman and Madhusūdanaśarman, whose fathers and grand fathers were also Trivedīs.[64] Mandhata plates of Devapāla speak of Rāmaśarman, Gadādharaśarman, Lohaṭaśarman, Garbheśvaraśarman, Purushottamaśarman, Udharaśarman, Alliśarman and Rajeśarman, who were themselves Chaturvedīs and whose fathers and grandfathers were also masters in the four vedas.[65]

In course of time such titles as Dvivedī, Trivedī or Chaturvedī started becoming typical as family names, rather than being indices of individual scholastic attainment and, gradually turned into brāhmaṇical cognomens. Nevertheless, there is epigraphic evidence to prove, that this process of emergence of the scholastic titles as stereotyped family names did not occur even upto the 13th century A.D.

There were different types of educational institutions in various parts of the country to impart lessons in the four Vedas by competent teachers. From Rajghat we have found seals of different charaṇas, which were probably issued by the institutions that imparted lessons in the respective branches.[66] The Paschimbhag copper-plate of Śrīchandra mentions eight teachers, two for each of the Vedas.[67] These teachers were variously called as *Adhyāpakas*, *Āchāryas* or *Upādhyāyas* and all the terms are found in inscriptions.[68] Manu has made a distinction between an Āchārya and an Upādhyāya. The brāhmaṇa who initiates a pupil and teaches him the Veda together with the Kalpa (sutra referring to sacrifices) and the rahasya (Upanishad etc.) may be called the Āchārya of the latter. But he who teaches the Veda or Vedāṅga for his livelihood is called an Upādhyāya. According to him Āchārya is ten times superior to an Upādhyāya. Manu went so far as to say that such hired teachers and their students were not fit to be invited at a śrāddha.[69] But Medhātithi, while commenting on Manu, and also other later Smṛitikāras, clarified the position by declaring that if a teacher stipulated for money, then only he became a hired teacher and was condemned.[70] In the inscriptions both the terms, Āchāryas and Upādhyāyas, are met with, and sometimes as epithet of the same person. These professional designations are common brahmanical cognomens of modern India. The Rāḍhi brāhmaṇas of Bengal use the title Upādhyāya with some words like Bandya, Chatta etc. prefixed to it, which according to some might have been derived from the gñāis of the brāhmaṇas.[71] The modern surname Ojhā, which is also derived from Upādhyāya, is known from an inscription of Gayāḍatuṅga preserved in the Asiatic Society of Bengal.[72] It indroduces the brāhmaṇa Kaka-Ojhā, whose family hailed from Ahichchhatra in the Bareily district, U.P.

The students were taught by these teachers to study the Vedas from various angles. A *Yājñika* studied the *Mantra* and *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kalpa* and *Mīmāṁsā* and some other optional subjects. But the *Śrotriya* tried to master the whole *Saṁhitā*. Mahāsenaśarman, the father of the donee of the Koneki grant of Vishṇuvardhana II was a Śrotriya. He is described as a scholar of repute in various branches of learning and is extolled as the very Vararuchi for his erudition in the exposition of *āgamas*.[73] The Silimpur stone inscription of Jayapāladeva eulogises the family of brāhmaṇa Prahāsa, whose father is said to have been the foremost Śtrotriya.[74] The Kamauli copper-plate of Vaidyadeva says that the donee Śrīdhara by reason of his pilgrimage to tīrthas, the study of Veda, generosity, in his performance of sacrifice and in strict observances of vows was chief among the Śrotriyas.[75] Thus the term Śrotriya is used here in a broad sense. The Mandhata plates of Devapāla refer to the family of donee Gaṅgādharaśarman, three generations of whom were Śrotriyas.[76] Thus the inscriptions suggest that the Śrotriyas were highly honoured. The honoured position of the Śrotriyas in the society can also be understood by the statement of Manu (VIII 65) that they, like the king and some others, could not be summoned in the court as witnesses. But in literature, often caustic remarks have been made about the Śrotriyas, because usually they only committed to memory the Veda, without knowing its meaning. Though sometimes strong opinions were passed against this mere cramming, there was always "an undercurrent of belief that mere memorizing the Vedic texts conferred great sanctity on the memorizer and removed all sins."[77] As a result, as Alberuni has remarked : "Only a few learnt its explanation and fewer still mastered its contents and interpretation to such an extent as to be able to hold a theological disputation."[78] This attitude of the Śrotriyas is well reflected in the inscriptions also. There were eight different processes of reading the Veda, such as *pada-krama-jatā-mālā-rekhā-dhvaja-daṇḍa-ratha* and *ghana*, to facilitate memorization.[79] Though all these terms are not found in inscriptions, often brāhmaṇas are praised for being experts in different types of *pāṭhas*. The Niduparu grant of the Eastern Chālukya king Jayasiṁha speaks of one Manḍaśarman who earned proficiency, among other things, in "*pada-krama* and *anukrama-pāṭhas*" of the two Vedas which he mastered.[80] The Sanjan copper-plates of the Rāshtrakūṭa king Amoghavarsha I[81] speaks of one donee Rakshāditya who was a Kramavid. The grandfather of another donee Narasiṁha Dīkshita was also a Kramavid. Govinda, one of the donees of the land grant of the Kadamba king Tribhuvanamalla was a Kramavid, while his father was a Vedavid.[82] The term Vedavid is found in the Code of Manu in connection with the activities of the *Parishad*. "Whatever *dharma* the *Parishad* of at least 10 or at least 3 virtuous men shall constitute," says he, "this it shall not allow to be changed. These men shall consist of those learned in the Vedas, *haituka, tarkin* etc, but if only three they shall know respectively the Ṛik, Yaju and Sāmavedas. Even one may decide the law if he be a Vedavid.[83] Kullukabhaṭṭa while explaining the term Vedavid said that the Veda here stands for both the Smṛiti and Śruti."[84] Thus Vedavid was he who mastered the Veda properly and was not satisfied with mere cramming. So Gautama considers a Vedapāraga as superior to a Śrotriya.[85]

Sometimes we get in the inscriptions the term Pāthin, which probably referred to a brāhmaṇa who was an expert in the Saṁhitā pāṭha. In the same way the term Tripāṭhi should be differentiated from Trivedi, as the former referred to a person who specialized in the three pāṭhas of a particular Veda, whilst, the latter referred to one who studied three of the four Vedas. The Jajilpara grant of the Pāla king Gopāla II[86] is very clear in this respect. It refers to one Śrīdharaśarman, who through his family was a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā of the Vājasaneya charaṇa, but he himself was a "*Sāmavedī Tripāṭhī Pāṭhaka.*" Thus, his family Veda was Yajurveda, but he studied Sāmaveda also, and was capable of reading Sāmaveda in three different ways. Mandhata plates of Jayasiṁha Jayavarman refer to a family of Pāṭhins who for three successive generations specialized in the same branch of knowledge.[87] The Asankhali plates of Narasiṁha II refer among the brāhmaṇa donees to Jagannātha, Kirttinātha, and Govindaratha, who were Tripathis.[88] Kosgain stone inscription of Vahara refers to the king's family priest whose name was Devadatta Tripāṭhī.[89] The term Paṁchapāṭhin which is added to the name of Uddharaṇaśarman in the Mandhata plates of Jayasiṃha Jayavarman[90] may similarly be explained a title for an expert in the five pāṭhas; though, one is not absolutely sure about this explanation, in view of absence of any explicit reference in the inscriptions, or, in literature. In the Mandhata plates of Devapāla where the epithets of the brāhmaṇas have been abbreviated the term Paṁcha has been added to the names of Kumāra and his father Kanha, who, in the light of the inscription of Jayasiṁha Jayavarman, may be called Pañchapāṭhins and not Pañchakalpin as Kielhorn, the editor of the inscription, suggested.[91] It is interesting that those who specialized in the various modes of reading the Vedas were either simply Pāṭhins or Tripāṭhins and Pañchapāṭhins. Brahmaṇas experts in two pāṭhas, or four pāṭhas, seem not to be specifically referred to in the inscriptions.

Most probably a brāhmaṇa desiring to be a Dvivedī or Trivedī, could choose in addition to his own family Veda, the other Vedas in which he wanted to be proficient. There are only a few inscriptions mentioning the branches of the Vedas in which a brāhmaṇa specialized in. From such scanty evidence no general inference can be made about the nature of specialization. The Vakkaleri plates of Kīrtivarman II speaks of Dvivedī Vishṇuśarman, who studied the Ṛik and the Yajurvedas.[92] The Konkuduru plates of Allaya-Dodda refers to three Dvivedī brāhmaṇas. Two of them mastered the Ṛik and Yajurvedas and the third one was proficient in the Yajur and Śamavedas.[93] But we are not in a position to say whether one could study the Ṛik and the Atharva or the Atharva and Sāmaveda. It seems that Vedic brāhmaṇas had different organisations and usually each brāhmaṇa enlisted his name in one or other such organisation. Thus, Devavishṇu of the Indor copper-plate is said to have belonged to the community of Chaturvedīs of Padmā of the town of Chandrapura.[94] Bhaṭṭa Akhandalamitra of the Alina copper-plate belonged to the community of Chaturvedīs of Ānandapura, where he actually resided.[95] The two sons of Buddhasvāmin, receiving grants from Dhruvasena II inhabited in the Ayānakāgrahāra. But while Dattasvāmin was a member of the Trivedī community of Daśapura, his brother was that of the Chaturvedī community of Ayānak-agrahāra, their native village.[96] In sanskrit literature also there are references to *goshṭhis* or groups of friends, all experts in same subjects, discussing and communicating ideas.[97]

The Chaturvedīs, because of being less in number their communities appear to have been broader in territorial jurisdiction than those of the Trivedīs and Dvivedīs. This is suggested by the seals of the Trivedīs and Chaturvedīs found from Nalanda.[98] Six such seals speak of Trivedī brāhmaṇas of different villages. But there is only one seal with the legend, *Rājagṛihe Chāturvidya*. Rājagṛiha may stand here for the site of Rājagṛiha vishaya and in that case the seal belonged to the Chaturvedīs who lived in the said town. Or, it is also possible that the number of the Chaturvedīs being less than the Trivedis, they formed homogenous group and called themselves by the generic name, the Chaturvedīs of Rājagṛiha.

So far as the respective social position of the brāhmaṇas attached to different Vedas are concerned, inscriptional evidence suggest that originally there was no social enmity between different groups. A brāhmaṇa belonging to a particular Veda could marry in a family attached to a different Veda. The charter of Jayasiṁha I shows that Svāmiyasas and Vishṇuyasas of the Vatsa gotra belonged to the Chhandoga charaṇa, but their sister was given in marriage to a family having the Bahvṛicha charaṇa. Moreover, Svāmiyasas and

Vishṇuyasas allotted a portion of land, from their own property, to their nephew.[99] The Raipur copper-plate of Mahāsudevarāja is more interesting in this respect.[100] It speaks of two brāhmaṇa donees Nāgavatsasvāmin and Vandhuvatsasvāmin of Vatsa gotra, who were students of the Aupamanyava śākhā of the Kṛishṇa Yajurveda. They are said to have been the sons-in-law of Savitrisvāmin, who apparently was an important person of the time, matrimonial relation with whom may be taken as a matter of the pride. The two donees have been introduced through their father-in-law. But it is interesting that their poor father has got no place in the inscription. This Savitṛisvāmin belonged to the Kauṇḍiṇya gotra and was a student of the Vājasaneya śākhā. Thus this inscription clearly shows that matrimonial relationships between the Śukla and Kṛishṇa Yajurvedīs were also not prohibited. A charter was issued by the Western Chālukya king Yuvarāja Śilādity from Navasarika (modern Nausari).[101] It records the grant of a village in favour of two brāhmaṇa donees. One of them was Revāditya of Aupamanyava gotra, who was a student of the Chhandogi charaṇa. The other donee was Varasyaka, who was the son of the maternal aunt of Revāditya. Varasyaka belonged to the Āśvalāyana gotra; but his Vedic śakhā has not been mentioned. If the silence indicates that he also belonged to the same Chhandogi śākhā, this inscription shows that two sisters were given in marriage to two Sāmavedī families belonging to two different gotras. The inscription would have been more interesting if the name, gotra and Vedic Śākhā of Revāditya's maternal grand-father were given in it.

Among the conservative section of the brāhmaṇas there was always an undercurrent of stigma for the Atharvaveda, which mainly dealt with charms and sorceries. Manu recognised only the first three Vedas and said that "he who knows them (is called) learned in the Veda".[102] The Senas of Bengal who were staunch supporters of brāhmaṇism, write in their inscription "...... as long as the Three Vedas whiten (or purify) the minds of the good .....",[103] suggesting thereby that the fourth Veda was not held in high esteem. In the Viśvesvara Golaki-maṭha only the first three recognised Vedas were taught.[104] Not only the Atharvaveda was underestimated, but also, in some areas at least, even the followers of this Veda were looked down upon. In the year 380 Dadda II granted a village to the brāhmaṇas belonging to four different Vedas. But the brāhmaṇas following the first three Vedas did not stay in the donated village and 5 years later the king had to revoke the old grant and issue a new charter omitting the names of Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas altogether.[105] The Chaturvedīs recognised the Atharvaveda and for this they were also considered degraded by the orthodox school. A story told in the *Skanda-Purāṇa* gives a revealing picture of jealousy between the two brāhmaṇical groups, one following the three and the other following the four Vedas. It shows how in Kanauj region the Chāturvidyas were differentiated from the Travidyas, and, the latter did not enter into matrimonial relation with the Chāturvidyas.[106]

Among the first three Vedas again Sāmaveda for some reasons or other lost its popularity in the South. It may be shown on the basis of inscriptions that the Samavedī brāhmaṇas were deprived of royal favour in respect of land grants. Prolaya-Nāyaka granted lands to 78 brāhmaṇas, all of whom belonged either to the Ṛig or the Yajur Veda.[107] Of the 76 brāhmaṇa donees of the Pentapadu grant of Choda Bhaktiraja only one was a Sāmavedī.[108] The Dibbida plates of Arjuna record the grant of lands in favour of 20 brāhmaṇas, all of whom except one were students either of the Ṛigveda or Yajurveda. He who did not study these Vedas was a student of the Śrī-Bhāgavata.[109] Not only the inscriptions, but also a passage in the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* clearly indicates that the Sāmaveda was not in high-esteem in the region where the rule of this Dharmasūtra prevailed. In the passage the braying of donkeys, the howling of wolves and jackals, the hooting of the owl, the sound of musical instruments, sound of weeping, and, the tone of sāmans are enumerated as sounds at which the study of the Veda must be interrupted.[110] In this connection mention may also be made of the Tirumukkudal inscription of Vīrarājendra referring to a school where only the Ṛigveda and Yajurveda were studied.[111] But these by no means prove that Sāmaveda was altogether ignored in South India, because we have already referred to brāhmaṇa donees of Drāhyāyana sūtra and Jaiminīya sūtra who received grants from the Vijayanagara kings Achyutarāya and Venkaṭa II.

Thus it appears from the aforesaid that two Vedas were of controversial popularity, but, by elemination, the other two, viz. the Ṛik and the Yaju seem to have been universally honoured. Of these two again the Yaju is associated with the *Karmakāṇḍa*. So the brāhmaṇas attached to this Veda are found to receive more patronage from kings and nobles. This popularity of the Yajurveda explains why the two donees Utsavakara and Divākara, receiving land grants from Someśvara II said that though their family Veda was the Ṛig-veda, they also studied the rites of the Yajurveda.[112] It is interesting to note that the conclusion to which we arrive at, on the basis of our study of the inscriptions, agrees with a modern survey report on the brāhmaṇas. A commission was appointed by the Government of India "to consider the question of the present state of Sanskrit Education in all its aspects" in the year 1956. The commission recommended that the Sāmaveda and the Atharvaveda "need special attention in the present state of Veda-Pāṭha". It is said that : "If the tradition of Sāman-chanting is gradually becoming more and more limited, that of the Atharvaveda may be said to have already become almost extinct."[113]

When a particular Veda or its śākhā would loose its popularity, the brāhmaṇas attached to these would also become extinct. Thus Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas have virtually disappeared from India. Brāhmaṇas attached to the Charaka śākhā, which was once a popular branch of the Yajurveda, are difficult to find now. In this process many other branches of the four Vedas have gradually been lost. An attempt has been made here to suggest, on the basis of a few inscriptions, how gradually this extinction takes places. But these suggestions should be regarded as tentative and not conclusive. The Veligalani grant of the Gajapati king Kapileśvara (15th cent.) speaks of one Nārāyaṇa Dvivedī, whose family Veda was Sāmaveda, but who has been called in this inscription as a Yajurvedin.[114] Perhaps this means that apart from his family Veda he studied the Yajurveda and thus became a Dvivedin. Interestingly enough he called himself a Yajurvedin and not a Sāmavedin, as it should have been called according to normal rule. Thus, it may be suggested on the basis of this inscription that in the mediaeval period there was a propensity to change one's Veda according to practical convenience. It is not impossible that as Sāmaveda was losing ground in the South the brāhmaṇas of this Veda were slowly identifying themselves with the other recognised Vedas. It is noteworthy also, that in the inscription under discussion, all donees, except one who was a Ṛigvedin, were attached to the Yajurvẹda. Similarly, on the other hand, Sāmaveda was very popular in Bengal and so Śrīdharaśarman, a Yajurvedī specialised in the three pāṭhas of the Sāmaveda, and has called himself *Sāmāvedī Tripāṭhi pāṭhaka.*[115] In this process many of the brāhmaṇas attached to various śākhās which are now extinct, might have been absorbed in the Vedic śākhās, popular in particular localities.

The gradual extinction might have taken place in the reverse process also. We find that with the passage of time, more specialist groups of brāhmaṇas were formed. But at the same time, adoptions of professions were also taking place. Brāhmaṇas of one Veda performed the rites assigned to other Vedas without changing his own Vedic affiliation. According to the śāstras a Ṛigvedic priest was entitled to be a *Hotā* in sacrifices. But the Baripada Museum copper-plate of Devānandadeva speaks of the brahmana donee Bhaṭṭa Brahmadhara, who, though he belonged to the Yajurveda, was a Hotṛi.[116] It is possible that in this process of adoption some of the Vedic śākhās were lost. For example, the Atharvavedi brāhmaṇas were considered experts in propitiatory rites. Apart from literary evidence there are few epigraphic references to that. The Goa plates of the Kadamba king Tribhuvanamalla refers to two Atharvavedi brāhmaṇas who are said to have been well-versed in the *śāntika-paushṭika mantras* and *tantras.*[117] When Lakshmaṇasena performed the Aindri-mahāśānti ceremony an Atharvavedī brāhmaṇa acted as his sacrificial priest.[118] Whatever might have been the original position, in course of time brāhmaṇas attached to other Vedas also began to do these works. The Śāntivārika Vyāsagangaśarman, who performed the Adbhutaśānti ceremony during the reign of Śrīchandra was a student of the Kāṇvaśākhā of the Yajurveda.[119] The Santyāgāradhikṛita Rāmadevaśarman of the Belava copper-plate of Bhojadeva also was a Yajurvedī.[120] Thus, whilst social stigma continued to remain attached to the Atharvavedīs, their professional speciality was adopted by other brāhmaṇas, gradually ousting the original Atharvavedīs from their field, who, for their livelihood, then started various other types of works including some of the non-brāhmaṇical type, and thus were lost amongst the masses.

Reference

1. *EI*, XIV, pp. 192 ff.
2. Ghure, *Two Brahmanical Institutions, Gotra and Charana*, p.5.
3. *EI*, XXXI, pp 1-10.
4. *ICTWI*, p.50.
5. Rhys Davids and Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary*, p. 140.
6. *MI*, pp. 69-70.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
8. *CII*, III, p. 70.
9. *Ibid.*, IV, pt. I, p. 141.
10. Kane, *HD*, II, pt. I, p. 328.
11. *EI*, XXVII, p. 118, *ibid.*, XXVI, p. 202 ; *ibid.*, XVIII, p. 250. *ibid.*, XII, p. 213 ; *ibid.*, XXXIII, pp. 221-23 ; *ibid.*, III, p, 103 etc.
12. *CII*, IV, pt. I, p. 62.
13. *EI*, V. p. 212.
14. *Ibid.*, XXX, p. 258.
15. *IB*, III, pp. 57-67.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-70.
17. *EI*, XXXI, p. 23 ; *ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 195.
18. *Ibid.*, IX, p. 111.
19. *CII*, III, p. 106 ff ; *ibid.*, IV, pt. I, p. 57 ff ; *ibid.*, p. 90 ff ; *JBORS*, II, pp. 405 ff ; *ibid.*, VI, pp. 274 ff ; *EI*, XII, pp. 321 ff ; *ibid.*, XXVIII, pp 278 ff ; *ibid.*, XXXI, pp. 129 ff ; *ibid.*, IX, pp. 103 ff ; *ibid.*, XXXII, pp. 139 ff.
20. *CII*, III, pp. 68-72.
21. *EI*, XXV, p. 61.
22. *Ibid.*, IX, p. 111.
23. *CII*, III, p. 164 ff ; *ibid.*, IV, pt. I, pp. 51 ff ; *ibid.*, pp. 57 ff ; *ibid.*, pp. 132 ff ; *EI*, VII, p. 25 ff ; *ibid.*, VIII, pp. 229 ff ; *ibid.*, V, pp. 106 ff.
24. *CII*, III, p. 117 ff ; *ibid.*, IV, pp. 110 ff ; *ibid.*, pp. 382 ff ; EI, 35, pp. 213 ff.
25. *EI*, XII, p. 241.
26. *CII*, III, pp. 243 ff ; *ibid.*, IV, pt. I, p. 137 ff ; *EI*, XXXII, pp. 129 ff ; *ibid.*, XXXIV, pp. 123 ff ; *ibid.*, XXXV, pp. 221 ff.
27. *Mahābhāshya* IV. 3. 101.

28. *The Rāmāyana, Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa*.
29. *EI*, XI, p. 18.
30. *CII*, III, p. 89.
31. *EI*, XXVIII, pp. 331 and 334.
32. *CII*, III, pp. 100-105.
33. *EI*, IX, p. 112.
34. *Ibid*., XXIII, p. 77.
35. *KS*, pp. 1 ff ; *EI*, XII. pp. 65 ff ; *ibid*., XIX, pp. 115 ff.
36. *Ibid*., XXXIV, p. 116.
37. *SI*, I., pp. 167-169.
38. *EI*, XXIV, pp. 250-251.
39. *JNSI*, XX, p. 196.
40. Sherring, *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, II, p. 171.
41. *CII*, III, pp. 196-200.
42. *JVS*, II (1935), p. 1.
43. For a detail study on the Atharvavedis see *supra*.
44. *EI*, IV.
45. *EI*, XXXI, p. 303.
46. *Ibid*., XXVII, p. 40.
47. *Ibid*., XXXII, p. 97.
48. *Ibid*., XXXI, p. 79.
49. *Ibid*., XXXVI, p. 12.
50. *Ibid*., XVIII, p. 59.
51. *Ibid*., XXXVI, pp. 144-163.
52. *Ibid*., III, pp. 147-158.
53. *Ibid*., pp. 236-258.
54. *Ibid*., p. 146.
55. *Ibid*., VII, p. 193.
56. *Ibid*., V, p. 51.
57. *IA*, VIII, pp. 273-284; *EI*, XXXVI, pp. 144-163.
58. *SBE*, XIV, pt. II, p. XXXVI.
59. *EI*, VIII, pp. 196-199.
60. *Ibid*., IV, p. 157 ff.
61. *Ibid*., XXXII, p. 154.
62. *Ibid*., IX, pp. 109-111.
63. *Ibid*., XXXII, p. 155.
64. *Ibid*., IX, pp. 110-112.
65. *Loc. cit*.
66. *JNSI*, XX, pp. 195 ff ; *ibid*., XXVI, pp. 214 ff.
67. D. C. Sarkar, *Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan*, p. 34.
68. The term *adhyāpaka* has been found, for example, in *CII*, IV, pt. 1, pp. 57 ff ; *EI*, V, pp. 106 ff. *Upādhyāyas* and *āchāryas* are commonly found. Cf. *EI*, IX,

pp. 103 ff ; *ibid.*, XI, pp. 139 ff ; *ibid.*, XII, pp. 269 ff ; *ibid.*, XXV, pp. 53 ff ; *ibid.*, XXX, pp. VIII ff.

69. *SBE*, XXV, p. 104.
70. Medhatithi on Manu II, 141.
71. The writer of the Russelkonda plates of Neṭṭabhañja (c. 8th century A.D.) was *Vandya* Devabhadra. While commenting on this name D. C. Sircar, the editor of the charter, suggested that the epithet *Vandya* prefixed to the name of Devabhadra may not be entirely unconnected with the origin of the cognomen Vandyopādhyāya, found among a class of Bengali brāhmaṇas. He said that "the tradition that these cognomens are all derived from the names of certain villages appear to be doubtful". Ref. — *EI*, XXVIII, pp. 258-263.
72. *EI*, XXXIV, p. 103.
73. *Ibid*., XXXI, p. 78.
74. *Ibid*., XIII, pp. 283 ff.
75. *Ibid*., II, p. 353.
76. *Ibid*., IX, p. 109.
77. Kane, *op. cit*, II, pt. I, p. 355.
78. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, p. 125.
79. This list has been taken from the Report of the Sanskrit Commission (1956-57). Different scholars give different names. For example, Anirvana, the author of *Vedamīmāṁsā* (p. 58) gives *pada-krama-jaṭā-mālā-śikhā-rekhā-dhvaja-daṇḍa ratha* and *ghana*.
80. *EI*, XVIII, p. 57.
81. *Ibid*., p. 249.
82. *Ibid*., XXX, pp. 75-76.
83. XXII, 108-113.
84. Hopkins, *The Mutual Relations of the Four Castes*, p. 46.
85. *SBE*, II, pt. I, p. 201.
86. *JASB*, XVII, p. 144.
87. *EI*, XXXII, p. 155.
88. *Ibid*., XXXI, pp. 126-127.
89. *CII*, IV, pt. I, p. 557 ff.
90. *EI*, XXXII, p. 154.
91. *Ibid*., IX, p. 112 ; *ibid*., p. 107.
92. *Ibid*., V, p. 204.
93. *Ibid*., pp. 60-61.
94. *CII*, III, pp. 70-71.
95. *Ibid*., pp. 171-191.
96. *EI*, VIII, pp. 194 ff.
97. B. Sharma, *Social Life in Northern India*, pp. 87-89.
98. *MASI*, LXVI, pp. 49, 54-56.

99. *EI*, XXXI, pp. 133-136.
100. *CII*, III, pp. 196 ff.
101. *EI*, XXXIV, pp. 117-122.
102. *SBE*, XXV, pp. 482-483.
103. *IB*, III, p. 56.
104. *JAHRS*, IV, pp. 155 ff.
105. *CII*, IV, pp. 57 ff & 67 ff.
106. *Skanda-Purāṇa*, *Dharmāraṇyakhaṇḍa* of *Brahmakhaṇḍa*, chaps 33-38.
107. *EI*, XXXII, pp. 239 ff.
108. *Ibid*., XXXIII, pp. 219 ff.
109. *Ibid*., V, p. 111.
110. *Ap*. I. 3. 17. It has been shown by scholars that the Sāmaveda derived "in part from popular songs" and had magical qualities in them. This magical air brought "Sāmavaveda to a certain extent into disrepute". Cf. L. Renou, *Vedic India*, p. 14.
111. *EI*, XXI, pp. 220 ff.
112. *Ibid*., XIX, p. 99.
113. *Rep. Sans. Comm.* (1956-57), p. 210.
114. *EI*, XXXIII, p. 288.
115. *JASB*, XVII, p. 144.
116. *EI*, XXVI, p. 79.
117. *JBBRAS*, XXXIV-XXXV, p. 79.
118. *IB*, III, pp. 106 ff.
119. *Ibid*., pp. 165-66.
120. *Ibid*., pp. 14-24.

2

STUDY OF OTHER SUBJECTS AND GROWTH OF VARIOUS PROFESSIONS AMONG THE BRAHMANAS

Apart from the Vedas the brāhmaṇas were allowed to study different other branches of learning, chief amongst these being the Vedāṅga with its six limbs, viz. (1) *Śikshā* (phonetics), (2) *Kalpa* (ritual of solemn Vedic and domestic sacrifices), (3) *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), (4) *Nirukta* (etymology) (5) *Chhanda* (metrics) and *Jyotisha* (astronomy). In the inscriptions, brāhmaṇas are often referred to in a general way, as experts in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas. But specific references to brāhmaṇas specialized in the *Shaḍaṅga-Veda* are also not lacking. Gadval plate of Vikramāditya I (7th cent) introduces Īśvara-Shaḍaṅgavid; incidentally his son and grandson are not described as being of the same calibre as his.[1] Prabhākara, one of the donees of the Jamalagama grant of Vikramāditya was also a Shaḍaṅgavid.[2] The Mehunabare plates of Sendraka chief Vairadeva (8th cent) speak of Shaḍaṅgavid Nandīsvāmin. His father Bhaṭṭa Rāmasvāmin was a Chaturvedin. But his son Nāgaśarman could neither become an expert in the Vedas nor in the Vedāṅgas and no epithet has been attached to his name.[3] Trivikrama, one of the donees of the Sanjan plates of Amoghavarsha I (9th cent.), was a Shaḍaṅgavid. The father of Narasimha Dīkshita, another donee of this grant was also a Shaḍaṅgavid.[4] Among the 536 brāhmaṇas receiving land grants from Vīra Choḍa (11th cent.) Shaḍaṅgavids are also found.[5] In course of time it was adopted as a family name and the modern brāhmaṇical cognomen Shaḍaṅgī has evolved from it. Dive Agar Marathi copper-plate (11th cent.)[6] indicates the stage through which Shaḍaṅgavid became Shaḍaṅgavi, to be changed into Shaḍaṅgī at last.

If a brāhmaṇa specialized in some branches of the Vedāṅga, but was not a master of all the six, he came to be called a *Paṇḍita*. References to Paṇḍitas are very common in the inscriptions of late mediaeval period, but not in those of early age; when, the brāhmaṇa scholars devoted their efforts to the study of the Vedas. Thana plates of the Śilāhara king Nāgarjuna (11th cent.) record the grant of land to the brāhmaṇa Mādhava Paṇḍita, the son of Gokarṇa Paṇḍita.[7] The Mandhata plates of Paramāra Jayasiṁha-Jayavarman speak of individual paṇḍitas as well as of paṇḍita-families.[8] Paṇḍita Vidyāpatiśarman's father was a Chaturvedī and his son was a Dvivedī. But Bhṛiguśarman and Kuladharaśarman, two donees of the grant, belonged to two paṇḍita families, and, their fathers and grandfathers were all paṇḍitas.

Vyākaraṇa, one of the six limbs of the Vedāṅga, developed as an independent subject and possibly included within its fold, Śikshā and Nirukta, in course of time. The Udaygiri cave inscription speaks of the brāhmaṇa minister of Chandragupta II who was well-versed in Śabdārtha, *i.e.* grammar.[9] An inscription of the time of the Western Chālukya king Vikramāditya (11th cent.) mentions Daṇḍanāyaka Ravideva, who is said to have been "a moon to illuminate the ocean of grammatical science" *Śabdavidyā payodhi-Vilāsakk-amṛitāṁśu*).[10] In the Pentapadu grant of Choḍa Bhaktiraja (13th cent.) the brāhmaṇa donees Rudraya and Gopālabhaṭṭa were honoured as versed in vyākaraṇa.[11] There were colleges, both in the north and in the south, where grammar was taught. Śrīchandra of Bengal granted ten *pāṭakas* of land to a teacher for the exposition of the Chāndra. Paṇini was recognized as a grammarian all over India. There were also other regional schools of grammer. Chāndra vyākaraṇa referred to in the Paschimbhag copper-plate of Śrīchandra was popular in eastern India.[12] The Tirumukkudal inscription of Vīrarājendra speaks of an educational establishment where one teacher taught the Ṛigveda, one teacher Yajurveda and a third one taught Vyākaraṇa and Rupāvatāra.[13]

Of the specific subjects of Vedāṅga, Kalpa was the field of specialisation of the *Yājñika* brāhmaṇas. It has been shown in the chapter dealing with *Yajana* and *Yājana* that with the emergence of Paurāṇic Hinduism Vedic sacrifices seemingly remained no more in vogue; yet, practically speaking, these sacrifices continued to remain as important items in the ritualistic performances. Consequently, the study of Kalpa-sūtras also was carried out with right earnestness. Behind the gradual re-installment of sacrificial activities was the contribution of the Mīmāṁsakas. They came forward with a philsophy in favour of rituals, whilst, some others advocated the philosophy of *bhakti*, and others, of *jñāna*.

The poets specialized in the study of Chhanda. However, scientific study of metrics probably was not very popular among the ordinary brāhmaṇas. There are so many brāhmaṇas among the poets who composed the *praśastis*, or are referred to in them, that they need no special mention.

Jyotisha, which was the sixth of the auxilliary subjects, meant in the early period, only astronomy. But from about the 6th century A.D., it became a very popular subject of study and its scope was widened. It included now, both astronomy and astrology. The science of astrology did not find favour even upto the early historic period, though, astrologers of various types were known to have existed. The kings had in their courts, *Kartāntika* (foreteller), *Naimittika* (reader of omens) and *Mauhurtika* (astrologers), with whom Kauṭilya showed his acquaintance, though, he himself was not in favour of too much reliance on them.[14] Such brāhmaṇas have also been condemned by Manu.[15]

A difference in outlook is noticed in Gautama's *Dharmaśāstra*, where, the king is advised to take heed of what astrologers and interpretors of omens tell, because, the matter of acquisition of wealth, or, security, were supposed to be dependent on these pronouncements.[16] Behind the popularity of this science was the contribution of the Magian priests and also of the Greek astronomers.

The science of jyotisha depended much on mathematics, and, we find that the brāhmaṇa scholars studied this subject also. Balsane inscription of the time of Kṛishṇa (12th cent.) speaks of Mahaluka Paṇḍita who was "a very sun in unfolding the lotus", lotus implying the science of mathematics.[17] The donees receiving grant from Prolaya-Nāyaka (14th cent.) were proficient in different branches of learning, of which gaṇita was one.[18]

The inscriptions of the Kalachuris supply interesting information relating to the study of astronomy. The Sarkho plates of Ratnadeva (A.D. 1128).[19] tell us, that the astronomers in his court were challenged by one Padmanābha over the time of a lunar eclipse predicted by them. In fact, the eclipse took place at the particular time that was calculated and predicted by Padmanābha, and, he was rewarded by the king with grants of lands. This Padmanabha belonged to the Vatsa gotra and five pravaras, and, hailed from Sonabhadra in the Madhyadeśa. He is said to have known two Siddhāntas, which might have been the *Sūrya-Siddhānta* and the *Brahmagupta Siddhānta*. This inscription thus proves, that there were various schools of astronomy, and, some of these were not so scientific. But, it is rather interesting that the same Ratnadeva, issued five years later, a charter in favour of Brāhmaṇa Padmanābha of Bharadvāja gotra on the occasion of a solar eclipse, which is said to have taken place in the month of Kārttika on a date, which, according to modern calculation, is absolutely impossible.[20] This must actually have taken place in the month of Śrāvaṇa. These incidents show that not all the systems of astronomical calculations were without some inherent defects of Padmanātha of Vatsa gotra. After the sample study of these two inscriptions we may quote the general statement of D.C. Sircar, an epigraphist, on the dates found in inscriptions. "It is well known", says he, "that most of the royal charters issued by ancient and medieval Indian rulers bear dates often with astronomical details which were no doubt supplied by the court astrologers. Various private records are also found to bear dates with similar details for which the village astrologers must have been responsible. On attempt at verification of such dates, however, it is found that in a large number of cases they are irregular."[21] Sircar has suggested two causes for such irregularities. They may be due to inaccuracy in scientific calculation or may be due to conscious attempt of fabrication by the astrologers, who aimed at land-grants on a particular tithi. Any or both of these causes throw light on the character and quality of the brāhmaṇa astronomers. Instead of being seekers of truth, these brāhmaṇas started indulging in intellectual dishonesty for gaining material ends, and this feature hampered the growth of the subject.

Nevertheless, there are several epigraphic references to astronomers and astrologers. The Gwalior stone inscription of the time of Mihiragula records the construction of a Sun temple by one Mātṛicheṭa on the very auspicious day of the month of Kārttika "heralded by the chiefs of the classes of twice born with the noise of the proclamation of a holy day and possessed of the proper *tithi*, *nakshatra* and *muhurta*."[22] Though all the kings had their own astrologers, this group of brāhmaṇas for some reason or other, received greater honour in the courts of the Kalachuris, the Kadambas and the Yādavas. The Amoda plates of the Kalachuri king Jājalladeva II records that the king escaped from a great calamity. After regaining his kingdom he granted lands to his *purohita* and his astrologer, Rāghava who perhaps did some propitiatory rites for him. It is noteworthy that this astrologer Rāghava was the son of Dāmodara, who was a well known Sāman-singer as well as a great astrologer (*Daivagñachūḍāmaṇi*).[23] Mirashi suggests that he is identical with Paṇḍita Dāmodara whose stone image has been kept in the Lakaheśvara temple at Kharod. This shows what a great honour the astrologers were able to secure in the Kalachuri-country. The Patna inscription of the Yādava king Siṁha is also interesting in this respect. It speaks of a brāhmaṇa family of Śāṇḍilya gotra in which the famous astrologer Bhāskarāchārya was born. It is said that he was an expert in three branches of jyotisha and in multifarious aspects of gaṇita. He was the author of *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi*, *Karaṇa-kutūhala* and several others.[24] Some other members of this family were also famous astrologers. Bhāskarāchārya's father Maheśvarāchārya was a *jyotirvidtilaka* and composed *Vṛitta-śataka*. Bhāskara's grandson

Chaṅgadeva was the chief astrologer of king Siṁha. This Chaṅgadeva, according to the information supplied by this inscription, founded a college where *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi* and other works of Bhāskara, as well as treatises composed by other members of his family, were taught.[25] Lands were donated for this college by Soideva and Hemadideva, two feudatories of Siṁhaṇa. This Bhāskarāchārya was not only a great astrologer but also a scholar in different branches of learning.

In Bengal also, the study of astrology was popular. Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, who like Bhāskara was a man of versatile genius and is known from his works on *mīmāṁsā*, *vyāvahāra*, *prāyaśchitta* and other rites and ceremonies, is said to have 'known the end of the ocean of *siddhānta*, *tantra* and *gaṇita*, created the wonder of all in the subject of astrology (*Phalasaṁhitā*), was the author and promulgator of a new treatise on horoscopy (*Horāśāstra*) and in these respects appeared as another Varāḥa."[26]

It is interesting that of the six accessories to the Veda, scientific study of technical subjects like *śikshā*, *nirukta* or *chhanda* were neglected. But jyotisha, which was a science subject, became the most popular of these, although it partly lost its original character. The brāhmaṇical family name Joshī which is found in Northern and Western India is derived from the term Jyotishī, indicating thereby the popularity and the hereditary character of the profession of the astrologers. This popularity was due to the stagnation of society, where, men depended much on super-human agencies, lost their own vitality and did not have much to look forward to. How this excess of belief in astrology brought disaster in a country is suggested by Minhajuddin's *Tabaqāt-i-Nashirī*.[27] Before the actual Muslim invasion of Nadia the astrologers predicted it, and asked the king Lakshmaṇasena to retire from the country. The king did not go, but "most of the brāhmaṇas and inhabitants of that place" removed themselves in Samataṭa, Vaṅga and Kāmarupa. As D.C. Sircar has pointed out, this no doubt "created panic in the western districts of the Sena kingdom and paralysed the Sena king's preparations to defend his country against the Turkish invader."[28] What is true with regard to a country is true in individual life also. Too much belief in astrology, and dependence on fate made the society crippled and caused frustration both in private and public life.

Of the various other subjects, the study of the Epics and Purāṇas earned great popularity. This popularity was gaining ground from about 2nd century A.D. The Nasik *praśasti* of Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi, which was composed at the command of Devī Balaśrī, the mother of Gautamīputra, puts on record her grant in favour of a Buddhist monastery, and this praśasti also compares Sātakarṇi with Epico-Puranic characters. Gautamiputra was, to quote the passage : *Rāma-Keśavārjuna-Bhīmasenatula parākamaso* . . . . . . *Nābhāga-Nahūsa-Janamejaya-Sakara-Yajāti-Rāmabarīsa-sama-tejasa.*[29] This shows how the contemporary world of idealism was infused with Epico-Purāṇic legends. From the Gupta period onwards the Epics and the Purāṇas became very important subjects of study. The Purāṇas as a theological treatise stood at par, in course of time, with even the Vedas. For example, on the akshayatritīyā day Arjuna of the Matsya dynasty donated village among twenty brāhmaṇas, who were either teachers or students of the Ṛig and Yajurveda. One of them was a student not of the Veda but of the Śri-Bhāgavata.[30] A new professional class of *Pāṭhakas* grew up among the brāhmaṇas, who specialized in the melodious reading of the Purāṇas, Epics and Nītiśāstras. The kings created such posts as Paurāṇikas who read aloud the Purāṇas to the dignitaries. The Kadamba king Tribhuvanamalla granted lands to Jayantabhaṭṭa, who was the Paurāṇikia of the king.[31] The Bhawal copper-plate of Lakshmaṇasena records the grant of land in favour of Pāṭhaka Padmanābhadevaśarman.[32] Paṇḍita Bhaṭṭaputra Śrī-Vaṭeśvarasvāmiśarman received a village as *dakshiṇā* from king Madanapāla for reading out the *Mahābhārata* by Vedavyāsa to the chief-queen Chitramati.[33] Purāṇas were read in public places also.

Inscription records a gift in favour of a temple where provisions were made for the reading of the *Mahabhārata* and the reader was paid from a part of the income of the temple.[34]

A medieval inscription from Rajasthan (14th cent.) was written by the brāhmaṇa Śivarāja, called a Vyāsa.[35] These Vyāsa brāhmaṇas were employed by the Rajput chiefs for reciting and explaining the Purāṇas and Epics. The Bhinmal stone inscription of Udayasiṁhadeva (13th cent.) refers to a Vyāsa, who was attached to the sun temple of Jagatsvāmin.[36]

The tradition of reading the Epics and Purāṇas in courts and public place continued in Bengal at least upto the 18th century. It may be suggested that these brāhmaṇas in Bengal had the additional title Bhāratī, which is still found as the cognomen of a group of Bengali brāhmaṇas.

Apart from Purāṇa-pāṭhakas there were the Nītipāṭhakas, who probably read and explained the stories from the *Pañchatantra* and some other fables. Gundapur inscription of the Kadamba king Ravivarman mentions that the king had enough knowledge in the *Nītiśāstra* of Vishṇugupta,[37] showing thereby that it was a prestigious subject of study. The Edilpur copper-plate of Keśavasena refers to land grant in favour of *Nītipāṭhaka* Īśvaradevaśarman.[38] The Madanpada copper plate of Viśvarūpasena also records the grant of lands to *Nītipāṭhaka* Viśvarūpadevaśarman, who was actually a brother of the donee mentioned in the Edilpur grant.[39]

The study of the Veda was restricted among the *dvijas*, but the Purānas, Epics etc. could be read and heard by all. The Vedic brāhmaṇas tried to monopolise their hold over the religious texts. But the out look of the Smārta brāhmaṇas was completely different. They wanted to popularise these literatures and to teach through them the *Varṇāśramadharma*, reverence to brāhmaṇas and the like. Thus the Smārta Paurāṇic brāhmaṇas contributed a vast mass of literature which taught the people the ethics of the changed society. The brāhmaṇas from their towered abode came down to the uneducated mass and shared with them the same joys and sorrows through the reading of some common literature. The literature which they read out, paradoxically enough, tried to draw a sharp demarcation line between the brāhmaṇas, having right to the Vedas and the others, denied of that. What the brāhmaṇas tried to propagate to the common people through the Epics and Purāṇas were codified in the Dharmaśāstras and Smṛitis, which came to be written in numbers tending to destroy the flexibility of the society.

While a group of brāhmaṇas tried to impose bindings on the society, there were others who were in search of the truth of religion. Nyāya-Vaiśeshika, Sāṁkhya, Mīmāṁsā and several other schools of philosophy grew up and filled the religious firmament with philosophical discourses. In these logic began to play a very important part and became the very basis of all philosophies. Consequently logic became an important subject of study both to the brāhmaṇas and the non-brāhmaṇas. Rudradāman claims that he was an expert, among other branches of knowledge, in logic.[40] Vīrasena of Kautsa gotra, the brāhmaṇa minister of Chandragupta II, was a master in grammar, logic and human character.[41] The brāhmaṇas had to develop this logic in order to compete in argument with the Buddhist philosophers. It seems from inscriptions that in Southern India logic became a prestigious subject of specialization from about 8th-9th century A.D. In the inscriptions we get such terms as *Ghaṭikāsāhasa*, *Ghaṭasāsin*, *Ghaṭasāsulu*, *Gahiyasāhasa*, *Ghaisāsa* added to the names of several brāhmaṇas, who are said to have been expert logicians.[42] Such brāhmaṇas were found both in eastern and western part of Southern India, but Ghaisāsa has been stereotyped as family name only in western India. This cognomen is found among the Desasth, Chitpavan and Karhada brāhmaṇas.

During this period we also notice in the inscriptions a desire on the part of the brāhmaṇas to describe themselves as learned in the Dharmaśāstra, Nyāya, Mīmāṁsā and other philosophies. This by no means suggest that these brāhmaṇas were followers of these philosophies, because no one could be a follower of the Nyāya-Vaiśeshika and Mīmāṁsā at the same time. This only shows the great impact of these schools of philosophy on the intelligentia, who wanted to know the essence of all. Malhar stone inscription of Jājalladeva, for example, speaks of a brāhmaṇa who "had no rival in the doctrine of Kāśyapa and in the Sāṁkhyas. He completely mastered the two Mīmāṁsās. He had for his eyes the teaching of Akshapāda."[43] Number of such brāhmaṇa scholars, however, were limited.

There were some other subjects of study which did not receive the approval of the orthodox section of the brāhmaṇical society. Āyurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharvaveda and Arthaveda, did not find favour of the orthodox group. Some professions connected with agriculture, veternary science, trading in animals etc. were highly condemned. But the statements furnished below would show that these restrictions were partly of academic nature. There were brāhmaṇas, though minorities they were, who broke with traditionalism and accepted all sorts of professions which would lead them to wealth and in course of time the liberal brāhmaṇas had to accept many of these subjects of study. Ingalls is perfectly right when he says : "There is no question but that traditionalism has been a steady ideal in Brahman culture. But this does not explain the immense influence of Brahmanism on Indian culture as a whole. This influence, I think, derived largely from Brahman minorities who broke with traditionalism either covertly or overtly".[44]

Āyurveda :

Manu did not like the brāhmaṇas to take the profession of a physician.[45] Same was the view of Vaśistha.[46] The *Mahābhārata* (xii 36, 28; xiii, 90, 13-14) regarded the medical profession as an ignoble one, the pursuit of which degraded a brāhmaṇa. *Vishṇu-smṛiti* went so far as to prescribe that if any brāhmaṇa takes food from a physician he will have to purify himself by living on milk for seven days.[47] Physicians were amongst those who were not to be invited in the *śrāddha*. But in the Ṛigvedic period brāhmaṇas took to medical science with honour. The honoured position of the physicians in contemporary society can be understood from the hymns where Rudra, Varuṇa and Aśvins were conceived as physicians. The reasons behind this change in social outlook may be manifold. With the growth of time the brāhmaṇas imbibed a sense of purity, which separated them from the people of other castes and some professions which required contamination with lower castes and impure objects were considered ignoble. The profession of a physician became degradatory in the same process. Actually the

Taittirīya Saṁhitā (VI, 4.9.3) and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (IV.I.5.14) deplored this profession because it entails promiscuous, unaristocratic mingling with the common people. Moreover, diseases were believed to happen by the displeasure of the gods and due to the influence of the evil spirits. The deads were considered impure. And the physician who dealt with death and diseases was also held in the same category. The Atharvaveda was an important source of medical science in India and it is possible that many of the Atharvavedins were eminent physicians. When physicians following other Vedas came in contact with these learned authorities, they might have been decried by the orthodox brāhmaṇas, just as the Chaturvedīs due to their association with the Atharvaveda were considered by them as a degraded community. Intimate connection of the physicians with the non-Vedic and anti-Vedic sections of the society might have been one of the reasons to outcaste them. The association of Jīvaka, the famous physician of the time, with the Buddha and his faith is quite well known. A chaitya pillar inscription from Karla records the gift of the Vesaga Mitidasa of Dhenukaṭaka, along with those of his wife, two sons and a daughter.[48] The monasteries had often hospitals attached to them, as is suggested by the seal of the Arogya Vihāra from Kumrahar.[49]

In course of time orthodox brāhmaṇical outlook changed a little. Parāśara modified the view of the early Śāstrakāras by saying that the pure brāhmaṇas should not take the profession of a physician. But the children of a brāhmaṇa, by his vaiśya wife, who came to be called as Ambashṭhas were allowed to take this profession and to attend on the brāhmaṇas.[50]

There are epigraphic evidence to prove that there was no dearth of brāhmaṇas following the profession of a physician. A Dhauli cave inscription of the time of Santikara records the construction of a temple of Aghyakavarāṭi by Bhaṭṭa Loyomaka, son of the Vaidya Nannaṭa and grandson of Bhīmaṭa.[51] This Bhīmaṭa is known from another inscription to have made some donations to the same temple. He is called a *bhisak* there.[52] The prifix Bhaṭṭa added to the name of his grandson suggests that this was a family of brāhmaṇa physicians, who were rich enough to make donations in different times. These two inscriptions belong to the time of the Bhauma-karas and in this connection mention may be made of two other inscriptions of Tribhuvana-mahādevī, belonging to the same dynasty, which record grants of lands in favour of a temple. The money accruing from the grants would be spent for various reasons including the supply of medicines to the mendicants.[53]

Two inscriptions of time of Nayapāla and one of the time of Vigrahpāla from Gaya were composed by Vaidya Vajrapāṇi and Vaidya Dharmapāṇi respectively, who might have been brāhmaṇas by caste.[54]

Somalapuram grant of Virupāksha (138 S.E.) registers the gift of land in favour of three brāhmaṇa donees. One of them was the physician (*bhisaja*) Virupāksha son of Rudreśvara, of the Bharadvāja gotra and a student of the Ṛig Veda.[55] It may be noted in this connection that in the Purāṇas the science of medicine has been regarded as the Upaveda of the Ṛig Veda.

The Jirumukkudal inscription of Virarājendra also supplies interesting informations.[56] Provisions were made by this charter to meet the expenditure of a temple, a college and a hospital. In this hospital sick teachers and students of the college and the temple servants were treated. It was provided with fifteen beds and the physician in charge of the hospital was assisted by a surgeon, (*Śalyavid*) two persons for fetching medical herbs, two nurses and one barber. Medicine and surgery were regarded by Suśruta as two wings of Āyurveda, one except the other was like a bird with one wing. This intimate association of the *chikitsāvidyā* and *Śalyavidyā* is thus attested by this inscription also. I-tsing informed that there were eight sections of the Āyurveda, two of which dealt with surgery.[57]

Dhanurveḍa:

The Purāṇas have taken the Dhanurveda as the Upaveda of the Yajurveda. But Vaśishṭha's *Dhanurveda* associated it both with the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. Vaśishṭha enjoined that a brāhmaṇa had to be accepted as a teacher of the Dhanurveda and only the members of the first three *varṇas* had access to this. The śūdras could take part in war, but they had to learn this profession by themselves.[58] This reminds us of the story of the *Mahābhārata* where Droṇācārya, a brāhmaṇa, was appointed a teacher to impart lessons in weapons to the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. But the said ācārya declined to be a teacher of Ekalavya because he was a śūdra. This Ekalavya then prepared an image of Droṇa, took him as his teacher and learnt the skill in and art of archery by himself. This story thus gives a picture of contemporary society.

But the Dharmaśāstras were opposed to the idea of the brāhmaṇas taking to the profession of arms. Baudhāyana, Vaśishṭha and Manu allowed them to take weapons only to protect their own life and property.[59] But there are ample references to suggest that in all ages a good number of brāhmaṇas took to the profession of arms and these restrictions were only of mandatory character. Pāṇini while referring to formation of terms used the word 'Brāhmaṇaka'.[60] Patañjali is silent on this verse. But *Kāśikā* applied the term to a country in which the brāhmaṇas followed the profession of arms.[61] Patañjali also seems to have had some information about this country because in one place he has referred to the "*Brāhmaṇako nāmo janapadaḥ.*"[62] Unfortunately we are not in a position to identify this place, but it may be somewhere in the north. Bhaudhāyana has mentioned that the profession of arms was practised by the brāhmaṇas of the north. The Punjab region is traditionally associated with the science of arms.[63] Vaiśampāyana's *Nītiprakāśa*, a book on weapons, army organisation etc. is said to have taken its birth in the form of communications to king Janamejaya at Taxila about the nature of *Dhanurveda*. In support of this association another interesting fact may be noted. Like the other Vedas, a personified form of the *Dhanurveda* was also conceived, the description of which may be found in the *Mahābhārata*, *Agnipurāṇa* and Vaśishṭha's *Dhanurveda*.[64] The representation of *Dhanurveda* in a personified form and his worship as god is not known in other parts af India, but it is said that in the Punjab *Dhanurveda* is personified as a deity.[65] He is credited with possessing four feet, eight arms and three eyes. In his four right hands he holds a thunderbolt (*vajra*), a sword (*khaḍga*), a bow (*dhanu*) and a discus (*chakra*) and in his four left arms a hundred killer (*śataghni*), a club (*gadā*), a spear (*śūla*) and a battle axe (*paltisa*). He rides on a bull and his eyes are said to be yellow in colour. The *Dhanurveda* mentions that there were seven kinds of war—*dhanuryuddha*, *chakrayuddha*, *kundayuddha*, *khaḍgayuddha*, *gadāyuddha* and *vāhuyuddha*. He who knew all these seven kinds of war was called an *Ācārya*, he who knew four of them was called *Bhārgava*, and who knew only one kind of war was known as a *Gaṇaka*. It would be interesting to inform in this connection that Bhārgava is a brahmanical cognomen which is found in the Punjab and U.P. But at the present state of our knowledge it is difficult to say whether the name is derived from the sage Bṛigu or from the title given to the teacher, expert in four kinds of warfare.

Kauṭilya has quoted the views of the earlier ācāryas who were of the opinion that in the army composed of the brāhmaṇas, kṣhatriyas, vaisyas and śūdras each preceding the other was considered better for enlistment. But by the time of Kauṭilya the brāhmaṇas began to neglect this profession and so Kauṭilya scornfully said that an army consisting of brāhmaṇas could be easily won over by the enemy merely by prostration before them. But inscriptions would show that the science of arms remained a favourite subject of study to them and history speaks of several royal families, who were brāhmaṇas by caste.[67] Pushyamitra Śuṅga, a brāhmaṇa, was the senāpati of the last Maurya king, whom he killed for being incapable of holding the crown. The Kāṇvas who supplanted the Śuṅgas were also brāhmaṇas. The Sātavāhanas, the Śālaṅkāyanas, the Pallavas, the Kadambas were all brāhmaṇical royal families. The examples may be multiplied to prove the popularity of the study of arms among the brāhmaṇas.

A few illustrations may now be given from inscriptions to suggest that the study of *śāstras* and *śastras* often went together and there were brāhmaṇical families who for generations acted as military officers of various kings. The Eran stone pillar inscription of the time of Budhagupta speaks of Mahārāja Mātṛivishṇu who won in battle against many enemies. His great grand father was Indravishṇu who was the most excellent of the followers of the Maitrāyanīya śākhā and was a brāhmaṇa saint, who spent his time in the study of scriptures and performed sacrifices.[67] Dhanyavishṇu, the younger brother of this Mātṛivishṇu has been mentioned in the list of Brāhmaṇa donee in the Eran stone inscription of the time of Toramāna.[68] Hindol inscription (8th cent.) of Chandrāditya speaks of one Bhaṭṭa Īśvara who adorned the post of *Mahābalādhikṛita*.[69] The Gharra plates of the Chāndella king Trailokyavarman record the grant of land to Rāuta Sāmanta of Bharadvāja gotra. His father Rāuta Pāpe was probably a general of the Chāndella king and was killed at Kakaḍādaha in a fight against the Turushkas.[70] The grant was therefore made as a posthumus reward for Pāpe and by way of maintenance of his heir. The Semra plates of the Chāndella king Paramardideva (13th cent.) mention in the list of brāhmaṇa donees Senāpati Ajayapāla of Traikāyana gotra, who was the son of Senāpati Kīlhaṇa. His son Somarāja, another donee of the grant, had the title Rāuta. Two other sons of Ajayapāla received grants. They were Dvivedīs.[71] Bhuvaneswar inscription of Rāghava (12th cent.) speaks of one Mahāsenāpati Rāyaballava who belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra.[72] The Bhuvaneswar inscription of Anaṅgabhīma III (13th cent.) also refers to Senāpati Ira who belonged to the Kāśyapa gotra.[73] The title Senāpati is still found among the brāhmaṇas of Orissa.

Gandharvaveda :

The profession of dancing, singing or acting was not considered as honourable, far less for a brāhmaṇa. This is probably due to the fact that the study of the Vedas and the performance of Vedic rites required deep concentration of mind, which could hardly go with the profession of a *naṭa*, who had to fix his mind on another to be an expert in that. Moreover, a *naṭa* had to move from one place to another to show his performance and this would hamper the persuit of Vedic rites. So, this profession could not go with the avocation of a brāhmaṇa and the orthodox law makers like Manu and others were strongly against it. According to them a brāhmaṇa taking to the profession of a *naṭa* should not be invited in the *śrāddha*.[74]

It has been suggested by some that singing and dancing in temples were non-Vedic practices and were not accepted by orthodox brāhmaṇas. But when Vaishṇavism incorporated within its fold various non-Vedic elements, these were also observed; and in course of time Vaishṇavas began to exclaim that a man can reach the god more by the performance of music than by *pūjā*. Perhaps the earliest epigraphic reference to *vādya*, *gīta* and *nṛtya* in temple is found in the Bhadreniyaka grant of the Maitraka king Śilāditya I. Lands were granted by this charter to a Sun-temple for the maintenance of the place of worship (*pūjā*), performances of dance and music, and to meet the expenses of sacrifices and other maintenance costs.[75]

By and by, the gandharvavidyā received official acceptance and came to be regarded as an Upaveda of the Sāmaveda, and was called *Devajanavidyā*. Nārada told Sanatkumāra that he studied along with the four Vedas other branches of learning including devajanavidyā. It is included among the subjects of study in the *Chhāndogya* and *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishads*.[75A] The *Agnipurāṇa* mentions *Gandharvavidyā* in the list of *aparā-vidyās* like *Vedāṅgas*, *Abhidhāna*, *Dharmaśāstra*, *Purāṇa*, *Nyāya*, *Vaidya*, *Dhanurveda* and *Arthaśāstra*.[76]

There are not many epigraphs which may be adduced in support of the brāhmaṇas' proficiency in *gandharvaveda*. Zulakallu plates of Eastern Chālukya king Vijayāditya I (8th cent.) speaks of the brahmāṇa donee Golaśarman who was at the same time *Veda-Vedāṅg-Etihāsa-Purāṇa-pāraga* as well as *Chatu(ḥ)-shashṭhi-kalābhijña*.[77]

An inscription of time of the Western Chālukya king Vikramāditya (11th cent.) from Yewur introduces us with a brāhmaṇical family who served the Chālukya kings in various capacities like *Bhāṇḍāgārika* and *Daṇḍanāyaka*. Ravideva of this family, belonging to Kāśyapa gotra, had knowledge in different branches of learning. He also claims to have been a great musician. "It is no matter for more conjecture", says the inscription, that when he plays music, "those swelling quivering instants display regular character of a (painted) wall surface (or display regularity of division), correct decorative lines (or correct tones) being duly separated and combined . . . .” This blessed brāhmaṇa Vidyādhara also knew to compose poems, which were probably sung.[78]

Study of architecture, sculpture and paintings :

Inscriptions would show that the brāhmaṇas did not leave untouched these branches of studies also. The Dūtaka of the Karitalai copper-plate inscription of Mahārāja Jayanātha of Uchchhakalpa dynasty was *Dīkshita-gṛihapati Sthapati-Samrāj-Chchha* (*chha*) *rvvadatta.*[79] Dīkshita is a term which was added to the names of those brāhmaṇas alone who performed Soma sacrifices. Thus Sarvavarman, the brāhmaṇa, who was initiated to Vedic rites, was proud to say that he was a *Sthapati-samrāt*, or king among the architects. The treatises on architecture divide the architects into two broad divisions. The *Sthapati-ācāryas* gave theoretical planning while the masons actually did the practical part. It is probable that brāhmaṇas specialized in the theoretical side of this science, which presupposes the knowledge of chemistry, mathematics, engineering, as well as of asthetics. Apart from technical competence such ācāryas were required to be men of pleasing disposition, born of a noble family, who should know the essence of the Āgamas and Purāṇas.[80] The monumental temple activities which were carried on in India from the Gupta period onwards were probably carried on under the supervisions of such brāhmaṇa *sthapati-samrāṭas* like Sarvadatta. In this connection it may be mentioned that in the Buddhist monasteries also monks used to supervise the building activities and repairs to suit their needs and such monks were known as *Navakarmmikas* or *Navakarmma-Vārikas*. We hear of them, not only from literature and inscriptions but also from seals unearthed from the famous Buddhist monastic site of Nalanda.[81]

An inscription of the Hoyasala period speaks of an excellent artist Stoṭakāchāri, described as of Viśvāmitra gotra . . . . versed in all *śāstras*, sought after to construct ornamental buildings and upper storeys, ...[82]

The temples thus constructed were adorned with sculptures and paintings. The sculptures forming part of architecture might have been done by the master masons. We have no definite evidence of brāhmaṇa sculptors. Pattadal Pillar inscription of the time of Kīrttivarman II (8th cent.) speaks of the brāhmaṇa donee Śubhadevarūpa, the son of Śivarūpa and grandson of Śivavardhamānarūpa.[83] Fleet has taken the term *rūpa* to be a sculptor and suggests that they were from the family of sculptors. But in all probability *rūpa* is here name-endings and does not stand for the word sculptor. Painting is a completely separate branch of discipline. We have a very interesting inscription from Orissa to show the association of brāhmaṇas with *chitravidyā*. A grant of the Śulki king Jayastambha from Dhenkanal refers to grant of land to Govvarahuti Śarmā of Yajnāḍha Parāśara gotra and Tri-Gargga pravara. He was son of Seṅgatada and grandson of Mahābhuti Śarmā. All the three members of this family have the interesting epithet *Chitradīkshita* added to their names.[84] Exact connotation of the term is not known, but the hereditary character of the profession connected with it is noteworthy. It shows that there were brāhmaṇa families who for generations specialized in *Chitravidyā* and came to be known as *Chitradīkshitas*.

Arthaveda :

Arthaveda or the science of politics has been regarded in the Purāṇas as an Upaveda of the Atharvaveda. This is probably due to the fact that the Atharvaveda alone among the Vedas deals with the prosperity of the king and his kingdom. It is also likely that some of the brāhmaṇa councellors of the king, who were expert in this *śāstras* used to perform certain sacrifices referred to in the Atharvaveda for the welfare of the king. Arthaveda is intimately connected with the name of Kauṭilya, who out of vengeance for the Nanadas took the vow to destroy this royal family and was successful in his venture. Success is the ultimate goal of the science of Kauṭilya, for the achievement of which the practical politician can go to any length. It is for this reason that poets like Bāṇabhaṭṭa, with high aesthetic taste, condemned the people at the persuit of it "Is there anything", he writes in his *Kādambarī*, "that is righteous for those for whom the science of Kauṭilya, merciless in its precepts, rich in cruelty, is an authority; whose teachers are priests hard hearted with practice of witchcraft, to whom ministers, always inclined to deceive others, are councellors, whose desire is always for the goddess of wealth that has been cast away by thousands of kings; who are devoted to the application of destructive sciences, and to whom brothers, affectionate with natural cardinal love, are fit victim to be murdered?"[85]

It is interesting that in the vast arena of Indian epigraphs there are very few references which speak of brāhmaṇas versed in Arthaveda, though among brāhmaṇas serving the king under various capacities there were undoubtedly some who had knowledge of this branch of learning. Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva, who was the minister of Harivarman of Bengal, claims that he had proficiency in the Arthaśāstra.[86] The Pushpabhadra copper-plate of Dharmapāla of Assam refers to brāhmaṇa Bhāskara who also is said to have been an expert in the work of Chāṇakya.[87]

Kṛishiveda :

Manu was against the brāhmaṇas taking to agriculture. But it is clear from Manu itself that even during his time there were law-makers who did not think in the same line. To quote him : "(Some) declare that agriculture is something excellent, but that means of subsistence is blamed by the virtuous."[88]

Ṛigveda expressly glorified agriculture by the verse "do engage in agriculture, thinking highly of my word (or of wealth), do find joy in wealth, in that (in agriculture) there are cows, there is your wife etc."[89] But as it was found that the pursuit of agriculture hampered the avocation of a brāhmaṇa, like the study of the Veda and the performance of the sacrifices, it was regarded by some, as derogatory for a brāhmaṇa to follow this profession. Some law-makers tried to find out a middle way. Baudhāyana, for example, says that he who can carry on the study of the Veda even being an agriculturist, need not give up this profession; but if he cannot, he should give it up.[90] There are in different Dharmaśāstras rules and regulations imposed on the brāhmaṇa agriculturists regarding the procedure of tilling the soil, uses of oxen etc., which presuppose the existence of good number of brāhmaṇa agriculturists for whom they were meant. Samvarta prescribed the gift of plough and oxen to brāhmaṇas, which were undoubtedly useful to them.[91] One of the sixteen Mahādānas prescribed by the *śāstras* is the gift of *Pañchalāṅgala* to brāhmaṇas.

Numerous inscriptions at our disposal speak of land grants made to brāhmaṇas. Some of them were homestead lands but many were agricultural fields. *Vāpīs* or water reservoires were also granted, naturally to facilitate agricultural growth. Some of these lands were tilled by hired agriculturists no doubt, but sometimes the brāhmaṇas themselves ploughed the field. Lunsadi plates of Śilāditya II (7th cent.) is informative in this respect. Lands were given by this charter to two uterine brothers, the brāhmaṇas Bhaṭṭi and Īśvara, who were sons of Dhanapati and belonged to the Chaturvedī community of Dvīpa, indentified with Deu. They belonged to the Dauṇḍavya gotra and were students of the Vājasaneya śākhā. Some cultivable lands and a pond were given to them with the stipulation that nobody should cause obstruction to them, "if they enjoy this land, cultivate (it), cause (it) to be cultivated, or assign (it to others) according to the usual rule relating to brahmadeyas."[92] This inscription leaves no room to doubt that the brāhmaṇas often cultivated the lands given to them. The Kaman inscription refers to land tilled by the brahmaṇas Sahula, Jajja and others. It mentions that three plough measures of land were cultivated by one Eduvaka at the time of gift but previously it was cultivated by three brāhmaṇas.[93] Hiuen Tsang noticed brāhmaṇa cultivators in the Takka region.[94]

The Vedic people living on the banks of the Sarasvatī might have been primarily agriculturists and in this stage agricultural activities were praised. But with the spread of Aryan culture men of upper-stratum must have given up agriculture, which were done by the conquered Śūdras. But among the Sārasvata brāhmaṇas this tradition of cultivation still persists. Campbell in his *Ethnology of India* writes that where the dried up Sarasvatī river admits cultivations, these brāhmaṇas are found to be very industrious and good cultivators.[95] The Sarasvatas of Malwa are also industrious agriculturists. Of the Kanaujiyās the Bhuinhār brāhmaṇas are agriculturists.

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डा. डिल्ली रमण रेग्मी
कल्याणी रेग्मी स्मारक
पुस्तकालय
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Veternary science and trading in animals :

Like the medical science, the study of veternary science was also not encouraged among the brāhmaṇas by the orthodox school. Some of the professions dealing with the animals were forbidden for the brāhmaṇas. Manu has asked to avoid at sacrifices to the gods and to the manes some brāhmaṇas, including a trainer of elephants, oxen, horses or camels. Brāhmaṇas were advised not to sell cattles, beasts of forests, animals with fangs or tusks, birds and all one hoofed beasts. But there are literary as well as epigraphic references to prove that these rules were not universally accepted and many brāhmaṇas took to these professions with honour. The statement made by Baudhāyana makes it clear that the brāhmaṇas of the north used "to sell animals that have teeth in the upper & in the lower jaws."[96]

The Nagardhan plates of the time of Svāmirāja (6th cent.) records two gifts in favour of certain brāhmaṇas of the White and Black Yajurvedas and the Sāmaveda. The first grant was made at the request of a corporation of elephant drivers. The president of this corporation was one *Hastivaidya* Sāmasvāmin, who evidently was a brāhmaṇa. It is interesting that many other members of this corporation also belonged to this caste. They were Pradīptabhaṭa, Śivadevabhata, Mātrisvāmin, Ganadeva, and Kankabhaṭa.[97]

The Karitatai stone inscription of the Kalachuri king Lakshmaṇarāja II refers to one Dīkshita Someśvarabhaṭṭa of Bharadvāja gotra, who was a son of minister Bhākamiśra, who performed many sacrifices, created temples and dug well. This Someśvara was also a master in many branches of learning and was matchless in the science of elephants and horses.[98]

These two inscriptions taken together leave no doubt that the brāhmaṇas who were experts in the science of elephants and horses were quite influential in the royal court and were at the same time affluent persons. These brāhmaṇas were by no means ignoble, because in that case persons like Someśvara would not have felt proud for that.

Goa grant of the time of the Kadamba king Tribhuvanamalla records the donation of land, along with other brāhmaṇas, in favour of Vāmana-bhaṭṭa of Vatsa gotra who was the doctor of the king's horses (*Vaidyāśvavādi*).[99] Another interesting evidence to this effect is provided by the Prince of Wales Museum plates of Jayabhaṭṭa (8th cent. A.D).[100] It records the grant of the village Mannātha in the Bharukachchha vishaya to brāhmaṇa Āchchaḍa, the son of Ādityanāga of the Hetavuka sub-caste. The donee belonged to the Kauṇḍinya gotra and was a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā of the Vājasaneya charaṇa. The term Hetavuka, found in this inscription is also noticed in the Harsha stone inscription.[101] It records that the king made grants in favour of a Śiva temple. Heṭavukas from the north and several other persons also made endowments in favour of this god. Now, Heṭābuka in later time meant a horse-dealer. The *Mitāksharā* on the *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti* mentions them along with betel-sellers, weavers and shoemakers.[102] The commentator Balambhaṭṭi specifically mentioned them as horse dealers and associated them with the Gurjjara deśa.[103] The *Mahābhārata* mentions that the residents of Bharukachcha offered the Gandhāra horses as presents to Yudhishṭhira at his Rājasūya sacrifice.[104] Thus, the Gurjjara country was traditionally famous for trade in horses and the inscription under study suggests further that the brāhmaṇas of this country took an important part in this business and so a Heṭāvuka sub-caste was formed.

The Pehova (Punjab) inscription records that during the reign of Bhoja, who meditated on the feet of the superior king Rāmabhadra, a horse fair (*ghoṭakayātrā*) occurred in the famous town of Pṛithudaka. This inscription gives a list of the important dealers who were present in this fair. This list undoubtedly records the name of three brāhmaṇas, viz. Bhaṭṭa Vīruka's sons Vanda and Rājyavala; and Devaśarman's son Phampha. Khambhaṭa's son Hoddha also might have been brāhmaṇa. This inscription suggests that such animal fairs were common and were held on sacred places and possibly on different *tithis*. The fair under discussion happened on the piśācha-Chaturdaśī day and the place was sacred due to the temple of the boar incarnated form of Vishṇu there. Like Pṛithudaka Traighāṭaka was another important place connected with *ghoṭaka-yātrā*. The same dealers moved from one fair to another and thus a sort of community feeling grew up among them. As a result they were in a position to come into a contract over the sale of the animals, which was binding on the buyers and sellers of various *goshṭhikas*. They agreed to pay two *drammas* each on the sale of horses, mares, mules and other animals in Pṛithudaka, in the case of purchase by the king or the Ṭhakkuras and provincials etc; and in Traighāṭaka and other sacred places in the case of purchase by the king alone, as permanent endowment. This money would then be divided into twenty - four shares. Seven shares would go to the temple of the god built by Guhāditya at Kānyakubja seven shares to the temple of the god built by Kadambāditya, seven shares would go to the Vishṇu temple built by Bhūvaka, the son of Nāgarabhaṭṭa Prabhākara on the bank of the Ganges in famous Bhojapura near Kanyakubja; one share would go to the temple of the sacrificial boar in Pṛithudaka near eastern Sarasvatī and one share would go to the priest of this temple. The remaining one share would go to the sacred place of Pṛithudaka. They also agreed to give on the sale of each horse by any purchaser one *dramma* and the money thus collected would be divided into twelve shares. Of these six shares would go to the temple of the sacrificial boar of Pṛithudaka and two shares to the priest of this temple. The remaining four shares were endowed for the sacred place of Pṛithudaka.[105] This association of the *ghoṭaka-yātrā* with temples, priests and sacred places gave it a religious character and the brāhmaṇas with honour could be party to it.

The brāhmaṇas with specialized knowledge in different branches of learning came to be appointed by kings in various capacities. Some of the posts in royal courts were reserved for the brāhmaṇas. The purohita, the daivajña, by nature of their works were required to be brāhmaṇas. But there were many other posts which were open and the brāhmaṇas by dint of their merit secured such important posts as those of ministers, councillors, judges, civil and military officers and the like. Many of them were raised to the status of nobility and thronged round the throne. We agree with Ingalls when he writes about these brāhmaṇas, successful in the material sphere of life, that they "were able to influence Indian institutions and modes far more than could the stay-at-home traditionalists."[106]

Reference

1. *EI*, X, p. 103.
2. *Ibid.*, XXXVI, p. 316.
3. *Ibid.*, XXXV, p. 196.
4. *Ibid.*, XVIII, pp. 249-250.
5. *Ibid.*, V, pp. 70 ff.
6. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 124.
7. *Ibid.*, XXXVII, pp. 254-255.
8. *Ibid.*, XXXII, pp. 139 ff.
9. *CII*, III, p. 35.
10. *EI*, XII, p. 280.
11. *Ibid.*, XXXIII, p. 230.
12. D. C. Sircar, *Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan*, p. 32.
13. *EI*, XXI, pp. 220 ff.
14. I. XI. 9, V. III, 247; IX, IV, 351.
15. *SBE*, XXV, p. 106.
16. *Ibid.*, II, pt. I, p. 233; Gaut. Dhar. XI, 15-16.
17. *EI*, XXVI, pp. 312-313.
18. *Ibid.*, XXXII, p. 266.
19. *Ibid.*, XXII, pp. 159 ff.
20. *CII*, IV, pt. II, pp. 622 ff.
21. D. C. Sircar, *Stud. Soc. Adm. Anc. Med. Ind.*, pp. 171-172.
22. *CII*, III, pp. 162-63.
23. *EI*, XIX, pp. 209 ff.
24. *CII*, IV, pt. I, p. 528.
25. *EI*, I, pp. 339 ff.
26. *IB*, III, pp. 25 ff.
27. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, II, p. 310.
28. D. C. Sircar, *Stud. Soc. Adm. Anc. Med. Ind.*, p. 171.
29. *SI*, I, pp. 204-205.
30. *EI*, V, p. III.
31. *Ibid.*, XXX, p. 75.
32. *Ibid.*, XXVI, pp. 1-13.
33. *JASB*, LXIX, p. 72.
34. *EI*, XVIII, p. 340 ff.
35. *Ibid.*, XXX, p. 190.

36. *Ibid.*, XI, pp. 55-57.
37. *P. S. Srikantha Sastri Felicitation Volume*, pp. 61-62.
38. *IB*, III, pp. 118-131.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 132 ff.
40. *SI*, I, p. 179.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
42. *Ibid.*, VI, p. 245; *ibid.*, XVIII, p. 256; *ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 125; *ibid.*, XXXIII, D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, p. 114.
43. *EI*, I, p. 44.
44. Milton Singer ed., *Traditional India*, p. 6.
45. *SBE*, XXV, p. 103.
46. *Ibid.*, XIV, p. 17.
47. *Vishṇu-smṛti*, LI, 10.
48. *EI*, XX1V, p. 282.
49. Altekar and Misra, *Report on Kumrahar Excavations* (1951-55), p. 103.
50. *EI*, XIX, p. 264.
51. *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 167.
52. *Ibid.*, XXIX, p. 218.
53. *Ibid.*, XXXVI, p. 81; *ibid.*, p. 89 ff.
54. *Ibid.*, XVII, p. 200.
55. *Ibid.*, XXI, pp. 220 ff.
56. K.L. Bishagratna tr. *Suśruta Saṁhitā*, I p. 30.
57. Takakusu, *I-Tsing's Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in Burma and Malay Archipelago*, pp. 127-128.
58. Vaśishṭha's Dhanurveda
59. *SBE*, XIV, pt. II, p. 20; *Ibid.*,
60. *Pāṇini*, V. 2. 71.
61. V.S. Agarwala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 51.
62. Patañjali's *Mahābhāsya*, II, p. 298 on Pān. IV 2. 104, Varttika-30.
63. *SBE*, XIV, p. 146.
64. *Śalyaparva*, 6th *adhyāya*, *Agnipurāṇa*-chap. on Dhanurveda (CCXLIX).
65. Syad Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, pp. 41-42.
66. Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*, tr. by Shamasastry, p. 377.
67. *CII*, III, pp. 88-90.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-161
69. *EI.*, XXXIV, p. 218,
70. *Ibid.*, XVI, pp. 272 ff.
71. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 157 ff.
72. *Ibid.*, XXX, pp. 158 ff.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 232 ff.

74. *SBE*, XXV, p. 104.
75. *EI*, XXI, pp. 116 ff.
75(a) *Chhan*., UP. VII 1.4. p. VII. 7.1; Brih. UP. II. 4. 10 and IV. 5.11.
76. *Agnipurāṇa*, tr. by M.N. Dutt Shastri, p. ii.
77. *EI*, XXXVI, p, 302.
78. *Ibid*., XII, p. 287.
79. *CII*, III, p. 119.
80. P. K. Acharya, *An Encyclopedia of Hindu Architecture*, VII, pp. 589 ff.
81. S. C. Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, p. 145; *IA*, XXI, p. 233; *MASI*, LXVI, p. 37.
82. *EC*, V, tr, p. 237; P.K. Acharya, *Encyclopedia of Hindu Architecture*, VII, p. 581, no. 9.
83. *EI*, III, pp. 1-7.
84. *JBORS*, II, p. 415.
85. Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Kādambarī*,
But the passage is quoted from S. Shastri's Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* pp. x-xi.
86. *IB*, III, p. 34.
87. *KS*, p. 175.
88. *SBE*, XXV, pp. 420-421.
89. *Ṛigveda* X. 34. 13.
90. *SBE*, XIV, p. 176.
91. Kane, *op. cit*., II, pt. II, pp. 125-126.
92. *EI*, IV, p. 75.
93. Elliot and Dawson, p. 13.
94. Beal, *Life of Yuan Chwang*, Book II, p. 73.
95. Campbell, *Ethnology of India*, p. 62.
96. *SBE* ,XIV, pt. II, p. 146.
97. *EI*, XXVIII, pp. 8-10.
98. *Ibid*., II, pp. 174 ff.
99. *Ibid*., XXX, p. 76.
100. *Ibid*., XXIII, pp. 151-152.
101. *Ibid*., II, p. 119 ff.
102. Mitāksharā on *Yāj. smṛti*, Chap. II, V. 30.
103. Balambhaṭṭi.
104. *Mahābhārata*, *Sabhāparva*, 50th *adhyāya*.
105. *EI*, I, pp. 184 ff.
106. Milton Singer ed., *op. cit*, p. 7.

3

SACRIFICIAL ACTIVITIES AND THE BRAHMANAS

PART I—YAJANA

Yajana and *Yājana*, i.e. performance of sacrifices by the brāhmaṇas themselves and to act as priests in the sacrifices of others, are two of the six important duties assigned to the brāhmaṇas. According to the *śāstras* : "Yāga (sacrifice) is constituted by *dravya* (material), *devatā* (deity) and *tyāga* and *yāga* means abandonment of *dravya* intending it for a deity."[1] The terms *yajña* and *homa* are sometimes used as synonyms but actually *homa* means the offering of *dravya* in fire intending it for a deity. Thus *homa* may be a part of the yāga, where all the *dravyas* are not offered in fire. In the Vedic period the only mode of offering worship to the gods and manes, approved by the vedic religion, was through sacrifices. But with the growth of Paurāṇic Hinduism the costly sacrifices receded to the background, though they were not given up altogether. Paurāṇic Hinduism, in fact, was a blending of *Devapūjā* and *Devayajña* and went hand in hand. Moreover, there was a small section of Vedic brāhmaṇas who still considered sacrifices as the only mode of worship. That in some regions sacrifical activities were given high importance is suggested by the statement of Yājñavalkya that the brāhmaṇas who perform sacrifices are better than those who study the Veda.[2] The inscriptions are also often full of descriptions of countries where day and night could not be differentiated as the dark flames coming from the sacrificial fire covered the sky; where the peacocks became joyous under such situation hoping that the rainy season had come.[3] The contribution of the Mīmāṁsakas should be taken into consideration in this respect. There were in the country several sāgnika brāhmaṇical families whose intimate association with sacrifice is attested by their names. Navagrama grant of Maharāja Hastin speaks of a brāhmaṇical family attached to the Mādhyandina śākhā of Vājasaneya charaṇa, who had names like Yajñāḍhyasvāmī, Gopayajñasvāmi, Śambhuyajñasvāmī, and Īśāṇayajñasvāmī.[4] Some of the names indicate that though this family laid emphasis on sacrificial activities, they were also touched by the Paurāṇic concept of secterian gods. In fact as time went on pure Vedic brāhmaṇas were rare to get. The brāhmaṇas who paid homage to Paurāṇic deities also felt proud in performing Vedic sacrifices.

The sacrificial fire kindled by a brāhmaṇa was either *Smārta* or *Śrauta*. There were some restrictions on the kindling of the *śrauta* fires, which were three in number. A householder who had a son, who had acquired maturity of mind with age, but whose hair was still black etc. could kindle the *śrauta* fire. But every brāhmaṇa householder was enjoined to offer daily oblation in the fire, which was set up in his house from the day of his marriage. This fire was called *gṛihya*, *smārta*, *āvasathya* or *aupāsana*. It is possible that though it was an obligatory duty on the part of every brāhmaṇa to kindle this fire, even this also could not be maintained by all for some reasons or other and he who could do so was honoured. In epigraphs the term *Āvasathika* is found as epithets of several brāhmaṇas. It is noteworthy that the term is not found in early inscriptions, when probably kindling of this fire was common, and are noticed in inscriptions from 9th/10th century onwards. Inscriptions show that even in the same family all the members were not called avasathins. The successors of Avasathin Devaḍa referred to in the charters of Madanavarman and Paramardin (12th cent.) were Dvivedī and Paṇḍita.[5] The father of Avasathin Vidyādharaśarman of the charter of the Paramāra king Jayasiṁha – Jayavarman was a Chaturvedī and his sons were Dīkshita and Chaturvedī.[6] Takāri was an important centre of brāhmaṇism and in the list of brāhmaṇas coming from there names of several Avasathins are found.[7] D. C. Sircar explained this term as the teacher of a village school.[8] But it seems that primarily it meant the brāhmaṇa who maintained the *avasathya* fire; and it is only secondarily possible that some such brāhmaṇas had *ṭolas* or primary schools in their houses and in course of time *avasathiya* became a synonym for a teacher in primary school. There is, however, reference to at least one family, in the inscription of Karṇadeva (11th cent.), which was probably associated with the teaching profession. The father of Avasathika Mālhu was Upādhyāya Sīla and his son was Paṇḍita Śāntiśarman.[9] The term *āvasathika* with its variants *āvasathin*, *avasatin* and *avasti* has given rise to the modern brāhmaṇical cognomen *Avasti*.[10]

In the copper-plate grant of Mummuniraja (11th cent.) some brāhmaṇas have the suffix *upāsanī* added to their names.[11] If the term is derived from the *aupāsana* fire, *Upāsanīs* were the same type of brāhmaṇas who in other localities were called *Avasathins*. The Asankhali plates of Narasimha II also refers to one brāhmaṇa donee Lakshmīdhara *Upāsanī* by name.[12] It is interesting to note that Upāsani as a surname of the brāhmaṇas is found in Mahārāshtra, and the brāhmaṇas referred to in the grant of Mummuniraja actually came from western part of India, though not Mahārāshtra. They came from Bharukachchha in Lātadeśa.

Of the Srauta sacrifices *haviryajñas* and *somayajñas* were more prominent. Agnyādheya was the first of the haviryajñas enumerated by Gautama (VIII 20-21). It was an *ishṭi* to be performed with the help of four priests—*hotṛi*, *udgatṛi*, *adhvaryu* and *brahmā*. Hotṛi was versed in the Ṛigveda, Udgātṛi in the Sāma, Adhvaryu in Yajur and Brahmā was versed according to some in the Atharvaveda and according to others in all the three Vedas. Though actual reference of the performance of Agnyādheya sacrifice is not found in inscriptions, in the Nesari grant of the Eastern Gaṅga king Anaṅgabhīma mention has been made of an Āhitāgni brāhmaṇa donee.[13]

A person completing the Agnyādheya sacrifice attained the position of an āhitāgni. So this inscription speaks of a brāhmaṇa who performed the Agnyādheya sacrifice. The Dasgoba plates of

Rajarāja III also refer to an Āhitāgni brāhmaṇa, named Jāgeśvar of Kṛishnātreya gotra.[14]

"From the evening of the day of agnyādheya the householder has to perform agnihotra twice daily in the evening and morning to the end of his life . . . . . ."[15] Though performed in the śrauta fire agnihotra is different from other śrauta sacrifices both in its philosophy and ritual. Being a part of the *pañcha-mahāyajña* it is performed as a matter of duty to discharge the debt which the sacrificer owes to the gods. No help from the priest was required to perform this. Still it was difficult for poor brāhmaṇas to perform agnihotra regularly because it required the maintenance of at least two milchen cows besides thousands of cow dung cakes and fuel-sticks. P. V. Kane has rightly said that as most of the brāhmaṇas were very poor and had to move from one's own village often to secure his livelihood "even agnihotra must have been comparatively rare in early times."[16] In the inscriptions kings and nobles are found to grant lands to brāhmaṇas for the performance of the *pañcha-mahāyajña;* for the offering of *bali*, *charu* etc. and for the performance of agnihotra. The brāhmaṇas who could perform the agnihotra were therefore more or less affluent section of the community and had some status in the society. They are honoured in the inscriptions as Agnihotrin. Sometimes the grandfather, father and son are all called Agnihotrins. But sometimes it is found that the agnihotra could not be maintained. Mandhata plates of Devapāla speak of the donee Anantaśarman, who was an Agnihotrins. His father Dharaṇīdhara and grandfather Chchhītū were also Agnihotrins.[17] But the Orissa Museum plates of Silābhañja (10th cent. A.D.) speak of the brāhmaṇa donee Lamvadeva whose father Agudeva and grandfather Golasvāmin were Agnihotrins; but he probably could not maintain it and so no such prefix has been added to his name.[18]

There are epigraphic records to show that the Agnihotrins could be attached with any of the śākhās of any of the Vedas. Devavishṇu of the Indor copper plate of Skandagupta who always recited the hymns of the agnihotra sacrifice belonged to the Rāṇāyaṇīya śākhā.[19] Agnihotrin Keśava referred to in the charter of the Gahaḍavāla king Govindachandra was a Sāmavedī brāhmaṇa.[20] Agnihotrin Bhaṭṭa Viśvarūpasvāmin of the Hindol copper-plate of Kulastambha (8th cent.) was attached to the Mādhyandina śākhā of the Sukha Yajūrveda.[21] Agudeva and Golasvāmin of the charter of Silābhañja mentioned above belonged to the Kāṇva śākhā of the Vājasaneya charaṇa.[22] Agnihotrin belonging to the Atharvaveda, however, is not known from inscriptions.

We have little information of other haviryajñas like Darśapaurṇamāsha, Chāturmāsya etc. from inscriptions, though it may be suggested that some of them were regularly performed. Uttaresvara grant of Kākatīya king Rudrāmba (13th cent.) refers to his preceptor Viddhanācārya who is known to have performed chāturmāsya and many other sacrifices.[23] For the performance of these sacrifices the brāhmaṇa householder was required to be well-to-do. But the Soma sacrifices were so costly that they "could be performed only by the kings, nobles and rich and by those who could collect large subscriptions."[24] So the brāhmaṇas are vocal in inscriptions when they can perform these Soma sacrifices. We have already noted that in the *ishṭis* four priests were required. In the *chāturmāsyas* five were required and in the *paśu-yajñas* a sixth was added. But in the Soma sacrifices sixteen priests were required. We shall discuss about them later on. At present it is important to note that the brāhmaṇa who was initiated to perform the Some sacrifice was called a Dīkshita. They were highly respected in the society. No Dīkshita could be referred to only by his name. He did not leave his seat to give or to receive *abhivādana*. In the inscriptions references are made to several Dīkshitas and they clearly point out that sacrificial activities did not stop even during the muslim period, Mallar plates of Vyāghraraja speak of Dīkshita Agnichandrasvāmin, who was the son of Dīkshita Durgavāmin.[25]

One of the donees mentioned in the Arang plates of Mahāsudevarāja (6th cent.) was Dīkshita Āyanīka.[26] Lands were granted by Silāditya III to one Dīkshita with two names Saggala and Prakāśa. His father Sāmbadatta was a Chaturvedī.[27] Similarly of the three members of the brāhmaṇical family referred to in the Rayagad plates of Vijayāditya (A.D. 703) only one was a Dīkshita.[28] None of the two sons of Vishṇudīkshita mentioned in the charter of Gayāḍatuṅga could perform the Soma sacrifice.[29] The Gahaḍavāla king Govindachandra on different occasions granted lands to his priest Jāguśarmā, who became a Dīkshita only in the fag end of his life. His father Vedaśarmā, otherwise known as Vilha and his grandfather Purushottama were also Dīkshitas. His son Prahlādaśarman started his career, during the life time of his father, as a Rāuta. After his father's death he became the Mahāpurohita of the then Gahaḍavāla king, but there is no epigraphic record to suggest that he was a Dīkshita, at least upto 1233 v.s.[30]

It is interesting to note that there is not a single Dīkshita brāhmaṇa in the whole arena of Bengal inscriptions, when brāhmaṇas and brāhmaṇical families of the category are not at all rare in other parts of India, both in the North and in the South and also in the adjacent territory of Bihar. But interestingly enough a dīkshita brāhmaṇa from Bengal was honoured by the Rāshtrakūṭa king Govinda and finds his mention in the Survarnavarsha copper-plate of that king.[31] It rocords the gift of a village of Loha to Keśava-Dīkshita of Kauśika gotra who was an emigrant from Pundravardhana. The Kahta plates of Sodhadeva (12th cent.) record the grant of lands to fourteen brāhmaṇas. They are introduced from their fathers. Of these twenty-eight brāhmaṇas four were Dīkshitas. One donee, Dīkshita Gautama was the son of Dīkshita Rāma. Two other donees Bhāskara and Vāhmaṭa, were sons of Dīkshita Śrīdhara and Dīkshita Deveśvara respectively. Though they could not perform the costly Soma sacrifices at least were able to maintain *Agnihotras* and are called Agnihotrins.[32] The copper-plates of Mādhavavarman speak of a donee Dīkshita Nārāyaṇśarman, whose father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all Dīkshitas.[33] Two charters of Vākpati king Muñja (10th cent.) found from Gaonri (near Ujjain) records grant of lands to brāhmaṇas. The first donee mentioned in the charter of V.S. 1033 was *Magadhadeśāntaḥpāti Kaṇopābhaṭṭagrāma vinirggata Saṁkṛitya sagotra tripravara Bahvṛichaśākhine Brāhmaṇa Sarvānanda*, the son of Paṇḍita Dīkshita Lokānanda. The same person received again land grant in the year V.S. 1043.[34] In the Mandhata plates of Jayasiṅha-Jayavarman (A.D. 1247) refers to a family of Dīkshitas, who for three generations could perform the Soma sacrifices.[35] The inscription of Devapāla found from the same place speaks of two more families of this category.[36] That family names were not still stereotyped can be proved by other instances from the same inscription. Udaīśarman's father and grandfather were Dīkshitas, but no such epithet has been added to the name of the donee, who at the time of the grant was not concecrated. Another donee Lāhaḍaśarman was a Dīkshita, while his father Yaśodeva was simply an Ahnihotrin and grandfather Nārāyaṇa was an Upādhyāya.[37] In the South also this tradition continued. In the Konkuduru plates of Allaya-Dodda, the Reḍḍi chief of Rajamahendri (15th cent.) mention are made of Dīkshita brāhmaṇas.[38] The kings of Vijayanagara were patrons of Brāhmaṇical Hinduism and in their inscriptions also references are found to Dīkshita brāhmaṇas.[39]

In the South Indian Inscriptions the brāhmaṇas are sometimes referred to as Somayajīns instead of Dīkshitas. Some of the brāhmaṇa donees of the Pithapuram plates of Vīra-Choḍa were Somayājīns.[40] Purohita Vāmadeva, one of the twenty donees of the Dibbida plates of Arjuna (13th cent.) was a Somayāga sacrificer.[41] Perumal and his son Viśvesvara, two of the donees referred to in the Chintakamauta grant of Someśa (13th cent.) were performers of Soma sacrifices. Other sons of Perumal, who also received lands along with other donees, however, were not Somayājīs.[42] Annavarppadu plates of Kataya Vema Reḍḍi (15th cent.) also include among the donees three Soma-Yājī brāhmaṇas.[43]

Apart from these general statements mention may be made of the the particular Soma sacrifices which were popular among the brāhmaṇas and are referred to in the inscriptions. The Soma sacrifices may be completed in one day (*ekāha*) or may continue for several days (*ahīna*). The *ahīna* sacrifice performed by a brāhmaṇa, if continues for more than 11 days, is called a *sattra*. The *sūtras* speak of seven forms (*saṁsthās*) of Soma sacrifices. These seven forms are Agnishṭoma, Atyāgnishṭoma, Ukthya, Shoḍasin, Vājapeya, Atirātra and

Āptoryāma. Of these Agnishṭoma was the model of all Soma sacrifices and is also referred to in several inscriptions. Śivarūdraśarman, the father of the donee Koṭiśarman of the Niduparu grant the Eastern Chālukya king Jayasiṁha claims to have performed the Agnishṭoma sacrifice.[44] Svāmiyaśas and Vishṇuyaśas, the two brothers who received land grants from Jayasiṁha are also known to have performed this sacrifice.[45] A 13th century inscription from Warrangal informs that one Viddhanāchārya, the preceptor of the Kākatīya king Rudrāmaba performed a Agnishṭoma sacrifice which astounded the Somayājīs.[46] This Viddhanāchārya also performed the Atyāgnishṭoma sacrifice.[47]

The Barnala yūpa inscription (3rd cent. A.D.) records that on the 15th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Jyeshṭha in 335 kṛita era five (Garga) trirātra sacrifices were performed by one brāhmaṇa whose name is obliterated in the inscription.[48] Trirātra is an amulgum of Agnishṭoma, Ukthya and Atirātra, which this brāhmaṇa ventured to undertake. Altekar has pointed out that the *dakshiṇā* prescribed for trirātra sacrifice is 1000 cows. But as this brāhmaṇa sacrificer was not very rich he gave 90 cows accompanied by their calves as *dakshiṇā*.[49]

Of the Soma sacrifices Vājapeya in course of time became very popular, not only among the royal families but also among the brāhmaṇas, who performed this in order to be renowned scholar and to prosper. Thus the brāhmaṇas who could perform Vājapeya sacrifice may be considered not only monetarily affluent but also of scholarly acumen, and naturally were honoured in the society. The *agñapti* Bhīmaśarman referred to in the Gudivada copper-plate of Jayasiṁha I was a performer of Vājapeya sacrifice.[50] Maka, the father of the donee Rāmaśarman of the Kendur plates of the Western Chālukya king Kirtivarman II was a Vājapeyāji.[51] Viddhanāchārya referred to earlier also performed the Vājapeya sacrifice.[52] The Asankhali copper-plates of the Eastern Gaṇga king Narasiṁha II (14th cent.) refers to the *puro-parikshā-pātra Raṅgu Vājapeyin.*[53] Vājapeyī in course of time has developed into a brāhmaṅic cognomen.

It is interesting that Shoḍasin was not a common Soma sacrifice and even Viddhanāchārya who claims to have performed many Soma-sacrifices makes no mention of it. Viddhanāchārya is known to have performed Āptoryāma sacrifice also.[54]

This āchārya claims to have performed the Bṛihaspatisava,[55] a kind of Soma sacrifice, which could be done only by a brāhmaṇa who has already performed the Vājapeya sacrifice.

He performed also the Sarvatomukha sacrifice.[56] Kumārasvāmin of Hārīta gotra who is known from the same Uttaresvara grant where Viddhanācharya is referred to, has been called Sarvakratuyājin, which according to the editors of the inscription may mean that he also performed the Sarvatomukha sacrifice.[57]

A few words may be said about the *sattra*, which is the privilege of the brāhmaṇas alone. Among the brāhmaṇas also only those who consecrated the three Vedic fires could perform *sattras*. Usually, though not universally, brāhmaṇas of the same gotra and Veda were engaged in the *sattra*. No priest was allowed to take any fee in the *Sattra* type of sacrifice, where all the participants were regarded as *Yajamānas*. But one among them was taken as the *gṛihapati*. The earliest, and perhaps the only definite epigraphic reference to a *sattra* is supplied by the Isapur Yūpa inscription of the time of Vāsishka (A.D. 102). It records the erection of a *yūpa* or sacrificial post by Droṇalena, the son of Rudrila, of the Bharadvāja gotra and a student of the Chhanadoga charaṇa, after the performance of sacrifices for twelve days.[58] "The twelve days or the *Dvādaśāha* as a *sattra* are constituted by the Prāyaṇīya (the commencing rite, an Atirātra), Pṛishthya, Shaḍaha (6 days), Chhandomas which are Ukthyas (3 days) and a tenth day which is an Atyagnishṭoma (called Avivākya, on which no speaking or dispute about errors is allowed) and the Udayanīya (concluding rite, which again is an Atirātra)".[59] Karitalai inscription of Jayanātha of Uchchhakalpa dynasty speaks of one Dīkshita gṛihapati Sarvvadatta, thus supplying an indirect evidence of *sattra* performed in the 5th century A.D.[60] A still later record of *sattra* is the Uttaresvara plates of Rudrāmba (13th cent.), where his preceptor Viddhanāchārya is known to have performed

Mahāvrata sacrifice.[61] Usually the Mahāvrata rite is performed in the last but one day of a *sattra*. *Ekaha* or *ahīna* forms of this rite later developed from this.

A person who performs the Mahāvrata was required to construct the fire alter. Agnichayana was not obligatory in every Some sacrifice, but in this case he had to do it. The Nagari plates of Anamgabhīma III referred to the brāhmaṇa donee Āchārya Agnichit Kayāḍiśarman of the Katyāyana gotra and of the Kāṇva śākhā.[62] The name indicates that Kāyāḍiśarman performed the complicated rite of agnichayana and received the epithet Agnichit.

PART II—YĀJANA

The brāhmaṇas acted as priests in the sacrifices performed by others and were known as *ritvikas*. The *Adhvaryu* performed the sacrifices on behalf of the *Yajamāna*. The *Hotā* recited the Ṛigvedic *mantras*, the *Udgātā* sang the Sāma songs and the *Brahmā* priest had the charge of overall supervision of the sacrifice. They are the four principal priests. In some sacrifices each of them was assisted by three additional priests.[63] From the inscriptions we get mention of Adhvaryu, Hotā and Udgātā but no reference of the Brahmā priest is found. This absence may be due to the fact that the Brahmā priest was originally, as suggested by some scholars, a follower of the Atharvaveda and performed propitiatory rities in case of errors committed in course of the sacrifice. But with the gradual dispopularity of the Atharvaveda these priests also lost their position. References to the Adhvaryus are very common and only a few may be noted by way of example. The Siwani copper-plates of Pravarasena II refers to Adhvaryu Āchārya Devaśarman.[64] They are sometimes called *Yajvan* and this term is found in the Dasgoba plates of Rājarāja III. This inscription also refers to the Hotṛis and Udgātṛis.[65] Mahada (Orissa) plates of Jogeśvaradevavarm (16th cent.) speaks of brāhmaṇa Madhusūdana of Vatsa gotra and a student of the Ṛigveda as a Hotṛi.[66] But perhaps the earliest epigraphic reference to Hotā is found in a mutilated inscription from Besnagar belonging to the same century.[67]

D.R. Bhandarkar, the editor of this inscription also finds here a reference to Potā.[68] Potā was the assistant of Brahmā. So if this reading is correct here we get the single reference to the Brahmā group of priests. The generic terms *Ṛitvikas*, *Vipras* etc. applied to the sacrificing priests are also found in inscriptions.[69] In this connection mention may be made of a group of priests known as *Puṇyāhavāchaka*, whose duty was to proclaim by certain *mantras* a happy day to the sacrifice or any auspicious ceremony. The Sirpur stone inscription of Mahāśivagupta Balārjuna refers to one Vāsavanandī who has been described as "*Vipraḥ Puṇyāhavāchakaḥ.*"[70]

Epigraphic evidence suggests that the members of other castes probably did not perform like the brāhmaṇas some regular haviryajñas. The Sātavāhana king Satakarni is known to have performed the Agnyādheya sacrifice.[71] But there are ample references of Soma sacrifices. In addition to these Rājasūya and Aśvamedha were favourite sacrifices to the ruling chiefs. The kings performed several other sacrifices which the poor brāhmaṇas could not do.

To start with the Aśvamedha sacrifice, which was the most popular sacrifice to the kings, and are known to have been performed by several members of various royal families. The earliest epigraphic record to mention as Aśvamedha is the Ghosundi stone inscription (1st cent. B.C.) which speaks of Parāśarīputra Sarvatrāta as an Aśvamedhayāji.[72] The Hathibada inscription also supplies the same information.[73] This Sarvatrāta has been supposed to be a Kāṇva king, but D.C. Sircar takes him to be a local ruler.[74]

Among the well known royal families the Śuṅgas,[75] Sātavāhanas,[76] Ikshāhus,[77] Guptas,[78] Vākāṭakas,[79] Vishṇukundins,[80] Bhāraśivas,[81] Pallavas,[82] Chālukyas,[83] and Varmans of Assam[84] are recorded to have performed the horse sacrifice. Some of them performed more than one horse sacrifice. Pushyamitra Śuṅga is said to have performed two horse-sacrifices.[85] Nārāyaṇavarman of Assam performed two horse sacrifices.[86] The later Gupta king Ādityasena is said to have performed three Aśvamedhas.[87] The Vākāṭaka king Pravarasena performed four Aśvamedhas.[88] The Bhāraśiva kings of central India earned distinction by the performance of Daśāśvamedhas.[89] Ekādaśāśvamedha sacrifices were performed by the Vishṇukundin king Mādhavavarman.[90]

The performance of Aśvamedha sacrifice was the symbol of independent sovereignty and so whenever the feudatories wanted to throw off the yoke of their overlords they performed a horse sacrifice as a part of declaration.

Now, it is difficult to say whether the multiple horse sacrifices were performed at different times or not. Scholars like D.R. Bhandankar are of the opinion that they were performed at a time, when the *dakshiṇās* for intended number of sacrifices were paid by the *yajamāna* to the priests. But D.C. Sircar holds a different view.[91]

Apart from these inscriptions referring to Aśvamedhas, we have found several small brick inscriptions commemorating the performances of Aśvamedha sacrifices, from different parts of U.P. It is suggested that such bricks were fixed in structures built in connection with sacrifices. One such inscription has been found in a mound near the village Musanagar in the Kanpur District and another inscription of the Musanagar type is preserved in the Lucknow museum. Inscribed brick tablets of this category were also discovered at Jagatgram in the Dehra Dun district. Palaeographically the Musanagar brick inscription may belong to the "century preceding or following the Christian era" and that of the Lucknow museum to the 1st half of 1st century A.D. The sacrificers were Devimitra, and Dāmamitra, who are not known to us from any other sources.[92] The Jagatgram inscription speaks of king Śīlavarman, who flourished in 3rd cent. A.D. He performed four Aśvamedha sacrifices.[93] These inscriptions suggest that the boast of the Guptas that Samundragupta performed the horse sacrifice which was long in abeyance is not at all justified. They also indicate that mere performances of Aśvamedha sacrifices need not prove that the sacrificer was a great king.

All the cases illustrated above speak of successful performances of Aśvamedhas by the kings. There is one interesting epigraphic evidence which speaks of the defeat of Pṛithīvivyaghra, the Nishādha king, who accompanied the sacrificial horse, at the hand of

Udaychandra, the general of Nandivarma Pallavamalla (9th cent. A.D.).[94] The sacrifice was thus lost.

Rājasūya is another sacrifice which was performed only by the kings. But compared to Aśvamedhas or Vājapeyas recorded evidence of Rājasūya sacrifice is scanty. The reason behind may be sought in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, according to which, one becomes a king (*rājan*) by performing the Rājasūya but an emperor (*samrāt*) by the Vājapeya.[95] The Satavāhana king Sātakarṇi I the Vishṇukundin king Mādhavavarman II performed this.[96] But with the coming of the foreigners the concept of kingship changed. Indian rulers started to use high sounding titles like *Mahārājadhirāja*, while the titles *Rājā* or *Mahārāja* were reserved for the feudatories or governors. So it did not behove the independent sovereigns to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice anymore.

The Allahabad Municipal Museum Yūpa inscription (2nd cent. A.D.) commemorates the erection of seven *yūpas* on the performance of the Sapta-Some-sacrifices by Śivadatta, the minister of certain king, whose name is lost. The brāhmaṇas who officiated in the sacrifice received as *dakshiṇā* a village. The inscription is very important as it shows how Vedic sacrifices were blended with Paurāṇic religion. Here after the references to the sacrifices and the honorarium thereon, homage is paid to Śiva and donations are made in favour of a Śiva temple and provisions are made for the maintenance of the free-feeding establishments for the mendicant ascetics.[97] The Barnala *Yūpa* inscription of 3rd century A.D. was erected by a king, whose name is obliterated, after the performance of some sacrifices. According to Altekar it also refers to the seven Soma sacrifices, which, however, is denied by the editor of the Journal.[98]

Of the individual Soma sacrifices Agnishṭoma is known to have been performed by the Ikshāku king Vāsishṭhīputra Śrī Chāntamūla,[99] the Vākāṭaka kings—Pravarasena I and Vindhyaśakti[100] and the Vishṇukundin king Mādhavavarman I.[101] The Vākāṭaka king Pravarasena I also performed the Uktha and Atirātra sacrifices.[102] We have already noted that the Garga trirātra sacrifice consisted of Agnishṭoma, Uktha and Atirātra sacrifices. It was performed by the

Sātavāhana king Sātakarṇi.[103] Three *Yūpa* inscriptions from Badva (3rd cent. A.D.) record the performance of Trirātra sacrifice by Balavardhana, Somadeva and Balasiṁha the three sons of Bala, the Maukhari general, on the 5th day of the bright half of Phālguna of 295 kṛita era. A fee of thousand cows was given to the priests.[104] The Vākāṭaka kings Pravarasena I and Vindhyaśakti and the Vishṇukundin king Mādhavavarman I performed the Shoḍaśin sacrifice which was not very commonly done.[105] Vājapeya, like Aśvamedha was a very popular sacrifice and are known to have been performed by the Ikshākus, Vākāṭakas, Vishṇukundins and the Western Chālukya kings.[106] A fragmentary *yūpa* inscription from Nagara records the performance of a Vājapeya sacrifice by at least three brothers, whose names are lost.[107] The wooden *yūpa* from Kirari had once an inscription on it, which is difficult to read now. It is made of *pterocarpus marsupium* and Hirananda Sastri suggests it might have been connected with the Vājapeya sacrifice.[108] The Sātavāhana king Sātakarṇi performed the Āptoryāma sacrifice.[109] This was also performed by the Vākāṭaka kings Pravarasena I and Vindhyaśakti.[110] A Maukhari *yūpa* inscription from Badva records the performance of the Āptoryāma sacrifice by Dhanutrāto, the son of Hastin of the Maukhari clan. Thousand cows were given as honorarium on this occasion.[111]

Of the other Soma sacrifices the Vākāṭaka kings, Pravarasena I and Vindhyaśakti, are known to have performed Bṛihaspatisava sacrifice.[112]

Bahusuvarṇa sacrifices was performed by members of various dynasties of the South, such as the Ikshākus, Vishṇukundins, Pallavas and the Western Chālukyas.[113]

The Bijaygarh stone pillar inscription (4th cent. A.D.) records the erection of a *yupa* after the performance of Pauṇḍarika sacrifice by Vishṇuvardhana for the purpose of increasing sacrifices, religion, welfare (in other world), prosperity, fame, lineage, good fortune and enjoyment. It was also wished that this act of merit would not only bring success and increase tranquility, but would create the condition of his having a son who would live.[114]

Pauṇḍarika sacrifice was performed by the Vishṇukundin and the Western Chālukya kings also.[115] It is to be noted that thousand horses were given as *dakshiṇā* in the Pauṇḍarika sacrifice.

The Vishṇukundin kings are known to have performed several other sacrifices like Prājāpatya, Prādhirajya, Sādyaskra, Purushamedha and which are not known from epigraphic records to have been performed by any other kings.[116]

Non-brāhmaṇas were not allowed to perform *sattras*. The Sātavāhana king Sātakarṇi is known to have performed several *sattras* like Daśarātra, Bhagala-daśarātra, Trayodaśarātra, Śatātirātra, Gāvamayana, Angirasamayana.[117] If the Sātvahaṇas are taken to be brāhmaṇas there is nothing unusual in their performances of these sacrifices. But the Nandsa *Yūpa* inscription shows how this general rule was flouted and influencial persons used to perform such sacrifices by making some brāhmaṇa the theoretical *Yajamāna*. The Nandsa *Yūpa* inscriptions (written twice on the pillar) commemorate the performance of Ekashashtitrirātra sacrifice. It is said that king Soma of the Mālava republic caused by his valour this sacrificial session to be performed. It is dated in A.D. 226 and it was written on the full moon day of the month of Chaitra after the completion of the sacrifices. Stream of wealth was offered to the brāhmaṇas on the sacrificial ground, "magical as it were, (as it led to the fulfilment of) the stream of all desires." In the sacrifice the king took the vow of following the foot-steps of ancient royal sages in protecting the subjects, in constructing the splendid assembly halls, and rest houses, in digging wells and tanks, in constructing temples, in making gifts at sacrifices and in telling the truth. Like the Allahabad Municipal *Yūpa* inscription here also it is recorded that at the end of the sacrifice the king donated lands for temples, which in this case were for those of Brahmā, Indra, Prajāpati, the Great Sages and Vishṇu.[118] This inscription thus throws considerable light on the contemporary society where a blending of Vedic concept of sacrifices with the Paurāṇic concept of worship at temples was attempted at. It also speaks of the futile attempt to revive the popularity of the Vedic deities by making a rapprochment with the Paurāṇic religion and accepting the new mode of ritual for the worship of the Vedic gods.

The śrauta-sūtras laid down rules for the performance of several *ishṭis* on the occurrence of certain events or for the fulfilment of certain desires. In the inscriptions there are no direct references to such Kāmyeshṭis, but possibly such sacrifices were actually performed. It is known from the *Rāmāyana* that king Daśaratha performed a sacrifice to save his country from severe draught and for which he had to bring the pious sage Ṛishyaśṛiṅga by following various tricks. The Dhenkanal copper plate inscription says that the Bhauma-kara queen Tribhuvanamahādevī donated lands to Bhaṭṭa Jayadhara of Bharadvāja gotra and a student of the Kāṇva śākhā of the Vājasaneya charaṇa for bringing rain in her country (*vṛishṭikāmanimittāya*).[119] It is possible that the gift followed a sacrifice which was performed for bringing rain, called in the sūtras a Karirishṭi.

Just as sacrifices were made for bringing rain, after good harvest the gods were pleased with sacrificial offerings. The Honnudike inscription of the Western Gaṅga king Śrīpurusha records that the king's uncle Śivamara-Ereyappor made a gift to the goddess of Ponniduki of all the gold that was received at the time of making sacrificial offerings during the harvest.[120]

As several kāmyeshṭis were performed for securing various desired objects, similarly several animal sacrifices are prescribed for the attainment of various desires. An inscribed boulder has been found near Sisila in the Shahabad District of Bihar. The inscription, written in charters of about 12th century A.D., is not very clear. But D.C. Sircar on the basis of the few legible words suggests that it records the sacrifice of certain animals in favour of a deity who was probably Śiva. Some lands were also granted to the priest by Nāyaka Angasiṁha by the second inscription in the same boulder.[121]

There are evidence to show that different *smārta karmas* were also accompanied by sacrifices. Bihar yupa inscription of time of Skandagupta was apparently erected by some noble whose sister was married to Kumāragupta. It is a mutilated inscription but there is reference to *havyas* and *kavyas* offered to the manes and gods. In another part it is mentioned that the performer of the sacrifice would share if there be any misdeed on the part of his father and mother, which lead us to suggest that the *yupa* was erected after some sacrifices connected with the funeral ceremony. The sacrificing priests Bhaṭṭa Suthita-svāmin and others received the grant of villages as honorariums.[122]

In connection with sacrificial activities mention may be made of a very interesting inscription issued by the Vākātaka king Pravarasena II. The Kothuraka grant of this king records the gift of a village by the king to the *gaṇa-yājī* brāhmaṇa Kaluttaka of Kauṇḍinya gotra, who was a student of the Taittirīya śākhā.[123] According to the injunction of Manu, gaṇa-yājīs were degraded priests and were not to be invited in *śrāddha*.[124] There are, however, differences of opinion among the commentators regarding the exact connotation of the term. Nārāyāṇa and Nandana took him to be a priest who performed sacrifices for a multitude of men or friends.[125] Medhātithi and Kullukabhaṭṭa suggested that Vināyaka or Ganeśa *homa* might have been meant by gaṇa-yāga.[126] Vāchaspati on the basis of *Kātyāyana Śrauta-sūtra* explained it as a sacrifice performed by a number of brothers and sisters.[127] Modern scholars like Bühler, and following him Mirashi, want to equate Gaṇa-yāga with gaṇa-homa, referred to in the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*.[128] According to this Dharmasūtra, a brāhmaṇā could perform the gaṇa-homa propitiatory rite for himself, for his parents and teachers and for none else. If he performed this on behalf of any other person out of consideration of wealth he would be tainted by guilt and would be degraded in the community. Mirashi, the editor of the inscription, suggests that Pravarasena II caused such a gaṇa-homa to be performed for himself by Kaluttaka and rewarded him by the gift of a village.

But this suggestion may not be acceptable. The Vākāṭakas were upholders of Brāhmaṇical religion and performed several types of Śrauta sacrifices. It is unlikely that such champions of Hinduism would drag a brāhmaṇa to degradation to serve their own interests, particularly when they could easily perform propitiatory rites for removing their guilts without causing trouble to the officiating priest. This inscription, in fact, opens a vista of the gloomy period when the brāhmaṇas had to fight hard for existence against the various odds. It is well known that the gaṇas or guilds had strong organisations. They made rules for themselves and did not always abide by the general rules laid by the śāstrākaras. It is possible that an orthodox law-maker like Manu, did not favour the gaṇas and enjoined that a brāhmaṇa who would perform sacrifice for the gaṇa would be degraded. But the liberal revivalist brāhmaṇas made rapprochment with the gaṇas, as with other important sections of the society; and inspite of the injunction of Manu, in practical field the gaṇa-yājīs were not regarded as degraded by them. The Vākāṭaka inscriptions show that members of this dynasty did not always follow the orthodox rules and were liberals in their attitudes to others. They themselves being brāhmaṇas did not hesitate to give their prince in marriage to Prabhavatiguptā, the daughter of Chandragupta II by Kuberanāgā. They granted lands to several Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas who were not favoured by the orthodox school. Similarly, by granting land to Kaluttaka Pravarasena II possibly gave official recognition to the gaṇa-yājī brāhmaṇa. With the decline of trade and commerce in the post-Gupta period the gaṇas lost their importance and gaṇa-yāgas were rarely performed. This explains why different commentators gave different opinions about the meaning of the term gaṇa-yāga.

We have noted that there are provisions in śāstras for the performance of propitiatory rites. Strictly speaking they are not yajñas, but usually pertake the character of homa. Penugonda plates of the Śālanikāyana king Hastivarman II (4th cent A.D.) record that the king granted a village to sixty brāhmaṇas of various gotras and charaṇas as *dakshinā* after the performance of *Prathama-kalyāṇa* rite, which was done for the increase of virtue, longevity and strength of the king, for the attainment of religious merit for easy passage to heaven. The donees were learned in various śāstras and followed the six-fold duties of the brāhmaṇas.[129]

A grant of the Saindhava king Jaika I (9th cent) from Ghumli records the gift of a village to the Sāmavedī brāhmaṇa Bhaṭṭa Svāmika of Vatsa gotra on the occasion of the performance of the *Pushyasnāna* ceremony.[130] According to the *Bṛihatsaṁhitā* it was performed for averting disaster and for bringing prosperity to the performer and to the kingdom. This Jaika usurped the throne by ignoring the rightful claim of his nephew and Altekar suggests that for the purpose of averting "the possible visitation of divine wrath at his unjustifiable conduct,"[131] Jaika performed this *pusyasnāna* ceremony.

The Rampal copper-plate of Śrīchandra records that the king granted lands to Śāntivārika Pītavāsaguptaśarman of Śāṇḍilya gotra for the successful performance of the *Koṭihoma* ceremony,[132] which is done to avert divine calamities. According to the *Agnipurāṇa* enemies cannot stand before the king who has performed the *koṭihoma* ceremony. His country remains free from pestilence, draught, disease and other calamities. The performer of the homa gets his desires fulfilled and goes to heaven bodily.[133]

The Dhulla copper-plate of the same king refers to Śāntivārika Vyāsagaṁgaśarman of Vārddha-Kauśika gotra and student of Kāṇva śākhā who received land-grant from the king on account of his conducting the *Adbhutaśānti* ceremony on the occasion of the performance of the fourhomas.[134] It is said that sometimes abnormalities are created in nature by gods in order to make men alert of the impending calamities. In cases of such abnormalities (*adbhutas*) *adbhutaśānti* ceremony should be performed to avert the calamity.

The Madhainagar copper-plate of Lakshmaṇasena informs that the king donated lands to Śāntyāgārika Govṁdadevaśarman of Kauśika gotra and a student of the Paippalāda śākhā of the Atharvaveda on the occasion of *Aindrīmahāśānti* ceremony,[135] which might have been performed by the king to propitiate the spirits with the desire to reconquer the teritories lost to the muslims.[136]

The records of sacrificial activities discussed above show clearly that sacrifices were living institutions throughout the historic period. It was beautifully blended with Paurāṇic Hinduism and became a necessary adjunct of various ritual activities. A careful study of the inscriptions may help in detecting the stages through which sacrificial activities had to pass. When the Buddhists and Jains decried sacrifices the liberal brāhmaṇas came to their rescue. They came out with their theory of Bhakti for secterian gods and eulogised philanthropic activities like construction of tanks and wells, alm houses for the poor and the like. Construction of temples for housing the sectarian gods also were started. The movement was so strong that there came a transitional stage when Vedic sacrifices were followed by the construction of temples for Vedic deities like Brahmā, Prajāpati and others. But in the changed social atmosphere these Vedic deities could not gain prominence and it became necessary to associate the new gods like Śiva and Vishṇu with sacrifices in order to make the institution of sacrifice living. The story of Dakshayajña narrated in the Purāṇas is reminiscent of that socio-religious movement when the followers of Śiva and others wanted to get a control over the existing religious system. They were accepted and as a result we find inscriptions where sacrifices were followed by the construction of a temple for Śiva and donations of land in favour of the same deity. Gradually, however, the *pūjā*-rituals of the secterian gods prevailed over sacrifices, which in course of time became a part of the *pūjā*, but not the whole of it.

As sacrifices were refrained from being the only modes of worship the poor brāhmaṇas were relieved and many of them did not bother to kindle sacrificial fires. From the post-Gupta period there came a time when even the *gārhapatya* fire was not kindled by all. This suggests that the brāhmaṇas without any fire were not at all degraded in the society. But those who could kindle such fires were proud to proclaim them. In fact many of our modern brāhmaṇical congnomens are associated with sacrificial activities and speak of the prestigious positions which the ancestors of these families held.

It so happened that in course of time sacrifices were mainly performed by the kings, nobles and purohitas attached to the court. Under the pressure of new religious movement restrictions regarding the nature of caste-affiliation of the *yajamāna* were relaxed and the inscriptions show that the Hinduised Mālava tribes were champions of sacrificial activities. D.R. Bhandarkar on the basis of a mutilated inscription from Besnagar has suggested that an Indianised Greek, Demetrius by name, also performed some sacrifices. If this is accepted it has a great baring on the history of contemporary society. Many of the kings who are known to have performed sacrifices were probably not entitled to do so had their castes been taken into consideration.

If the study of inscriptions has any value it would show that south India was the cradle of sacrificial activities. The kings ruling in the countries situated south of the Vindhyas performed the maximum number of sacrifices recorded in the inscriptions. It is mainly from the south Indian inscriptions that we get the names of various types of sacrificing priests. The reasons are many. It was the north which had to bear the brunt of successive foreign aggressions. It was here that the Buddhists laid their main field of activities and could capture many reigning kings. There was a sharp decline in trade and commerce in the north immediately after the Guptas. On the contrary, South was relatively free from foreign attacks. The royal families patronised brahmanical religion. The Buddhists and Jains were kept in check by the Śaiva and Vaishṇava asceties who also had a number of *maṭhas* there. The people were comparatively more solvent to perform the costly rituals. When South sustained the sacrifices, north showed symptoms of decadence by its excessive stress on *tithi*, *nakshatras* and on propitiatory rites. This historic background explains why the brāhmaṇas of the South are, in general, still now more orthodox in their rituals and behaviour than their counterparts in the North.

References

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2. *Yaj. Sm.* I. 199.
3. *SI*, I, pp. 386-87; *EI*, XIV, pp. 121-130.
4. *EI*, XXI, p. 126.
5. *Ibid.*, XXXII, p. 122; *ibid.*, pp. 125, 127.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
7. *Loc. cit.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
9. *Ibid.*, XI, p. 145.
10. *Ibid.*, XXIV, p. 233; *ibid.*, XXIV, p. 225ff; *ibid.*, XXXII, p. 122; *ibid.*, XXXII, p. 154.
11. *Ibid.*, XXV, p. 61.
12. *Ibid.*, XXXI, p. 126.
13. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 257.
14. *Ibid.*, XXXI, p. 261.
15. Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 998.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 979.
17. *EI*, IX, p. 111.
18. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 277.
19. *CII*, III, pp. 70-72.
20. *EI*, XXXIII, p. 180.
21. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 113.
22. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 277.
23. *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, p. 93.
24. Kane, *Op. cit.*, p. 979.
25. *EI*, XXXIV, p. 49.
26. *Ibid.*, XXIII, p. 21.
27. *Ibid.*, XXII, p. 119.
28. *Ibid.*, X, p. 17.
29. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, p. 103.
30. *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 68ff; *ibid.*, IV, pp. 97ff.
31. *IA*, XII, p. 251.
32. *EI*, VII, p. 92.
33. *Ibid.*, XXXII, p. 122.
34. *Ibid.*, XXIII, p. 109; *ibid.*, p. 113.
35. *Ibid.*, XXXII, p. 154.
36. *Ibid.*, IX, pp. 109-110.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.
38. *Ibid.*, V, pp. 53ff.
39. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 21ff, 35ff, 113ff, 236ff.
40. *Ibid.*, V, pp. 70ff.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
42. *Ibid.*, XXXVII, pp. 182-183.
43. *Ibid.*, XXXVI, pp. 187-188.
44. *Ibid.*, XVIII, pp. 56-67.
45. *Ibid.*, XXXI, p. 135.

46. *Ibid* , XXXVIII, p. 93.
47. *Loc. cit.*
48. *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 123.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
50. *Ibid.*, XXXI, p. 135.
51. *Ibid.*, IX, p. 204.
52. *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, p. 93.
53. *Ibid.*, XXXI, p. 125.
54. *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, p. 93.
55. *Loc. cit.*
56. *Loc. cit.*
57. *Loc. cit.*
58. *SI*, I, pp. 149-50.
59. Kane, *op. cit.*, II. pt. II, pp. 1213-1214.
60. *CII*, III, pp. 117-120.
61. *EI*, XXXVIII, p. 93.
62. *Ibid.*, XXVII, p. 257.
63. The Hotā was assisted by Maitrāvaruṇa, Achchāvāko, and Grāvastut; the Udgātā was assisted by Prastatā, Pratihartā and Subrahmaṇya; the Adhyaryu was assisted by Pratiprasthātā, Neshṭri and Unnetā; the Brahma priest was assisted by Brāhmanachchhamsa, Agnidhra Pota.
64. *CII*, III, p. 246.
65. *EI*, XXXI, p. 261.
66. *Ibid.*, III, p. 220.
67. *IA*, XLVIII, p. 77.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
69. *EI*, XXVIII, p. 257; *ibid.*, XII, p. 130.
70. *Ibid.*, XI, p. 193.
71. *SI*, I, p. 194.
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.
73. *EI*, XXII, pp. 203ff.
74. *SI*, I, p. 91, Foot note 1.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
77. *EI*, XXI, p. 62; *ibid*, XXXIV, p. 19; *ibid.*, XXXV, p. 3.
78. *SI*, I, p. 321, 275, 436; A.S. Altekar, *Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, pp. 67-69, 201-203.
79. *EI*, XXII, p. 171.
80. *Ibid.*, XVII, pp. 336.
81. *CII*, III, p. 96; *The Vakaitaka-Gupta Age*, p. 29.
82. *EI*, XXVII, p. 62; *ibid.*, I, p. 7.

83. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, p. 121.
84. *MASI*, LXVI, pp. 69-70; *SI*, I, p. 384; *EI*, XXX, 288.
85. *SI*, I, p. 95.
86. *MASI*, LXVI, *loc. cit.*
87. *CII*, III, p. 213.
88. *SI*, I, p. 431; *ibid.*, p. 443.
89. *The Vatakata Gupta Age*, p. 29.
90. *EI*, XVII, p. 336; *ibid.*, XII, p. 134.
91. I.C., p. ; D.C., Sircar, *Successors of the Satavahanas.*
92. *EI*, XXX, p. 120; *ibid.*, XXXIII, pp. 99-100.
93. *Ibid.*, XXX, p. 120.
94. *IA*, VIII, p. 275-276.
95. *Sat. Brah.*, IX, 3. 4. 8.
96. *SI*, I, p. 194; *EI*, IV, p. 196.
97. *EI*, XXIV, pp. 245-251.
98. *Ibid.*, XXVI, pp. 118-123. See also the Foot note 10, p. 120.
99. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, p. 19; *ibid.*, XXXV, p. 3.
100. *Ibid.*, XXIII, pp. 171.
101. *SI*, I, p. 431, 443; *EI*, XVII, pp. 334-347.
102. *Ibid.*, XXII, p. 171.
103. *SI*, I, p. 195.
104. *EI*, XXIII, pp. 42-52.
105. *Ibid.*, XXII, p. 171; *ibid.*, IV, p. 196.
106. *Ibid.*, XXXV, p. 3; *ibid.*, XXII, p. 171.
107. *MASI*, IV, p. 120.
108. *EI.*, XXIII, pp. 152-157.
109. *SI*, I, p. 195.
110. *EI*, XXII, p. 171.
111. *Ibid.*, XXIV, pp. 251-253.
112. *Ibid.*, XXII, p. 171.
113. *Ibid.*, XXXV, p. 19; *ibid.*, XXVII, p. 316; *ibid.*, p. 62; *ibid.*, XXXIV, p. 121.
114. *CII*, III, pp. 252-254.
115. *EI*, XVII, pp. 334-337; *ibid.*, XXVII, p. 316.
116. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 196; *CII*, III, p. 97.
117. *SI*, I, pp. 194-195.
118. *EI*, XXVII, pp. 252ff.
119. *JBORS*, II, p. 423.
120. *IE*, I, pp. pp. 17-20.
121. *EI*, XXXVI, pp. 39-41.
122. *CII*, III, pp. 49-50.
123. *EI*, XXVI, pp. 160.

124. *SBE*, XXV, p. 106.
125. G. N. Jha, *Manu-Smriti*, *Notes*, pt. II, p. 230.
126. Medhātithi and Kullukabhaṭṭa on Manu II, 164.
127. Vāchaspati with reference to *Katyayana Srauta Sutra* 22.11.12 & 25.13.29.
128. *SBE*, XIV, pp. 329-330.
129. *EI*, XXXV, pp. 145-150.
130. *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 206.
131. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
132. *IB*, III, p. 5.
133. *Agnipurana*, ch. CXLIX, 7-10.
134. *IB*, III, pp. 165-166.
135. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
136. *JASB*, 3rd series, VIII, pp. 18-20.

4

GIFTS AND THE BRAHMANAS

PART I—GIFTS MADE TO THE BRĀHMAṆAS (PRATIGRAHA)

One of the accepted means of livelihood for a brāhmaṇa was to receive gifts from proper persons. This is known as *Pratigraha.* Medhātithi while commenting on Manu writes that when a gifts is made with vedic *mantra* and when it is accepted with the idea that this would secure for the donor some religious merit, should be taken as *pratigraha.*[1] The numerous inscriptions at our disposal suggest that kings and nobles, as well as common people, used to make gifts to brāhmaṇas on different occasions or without any occasion at all. Accordingly *dānas* are divided into three categories—*nitya, naimittika* and *kāmya.* "Whatever is given everyday (such as food after Vaiśvadeva etc) is *nitya*; what is given at certain specified times (such as on eclipses), or on account of doing centain acts (such as penances for lapses) is called *naimittika;* what is given through the desire of securing progeny, victory, prosperity, heaven or a wife is called *kāmya* (as it springs from a desire)."[2] There are some gifts which due to their grandeur are known as *mahādānas*, and are found to be performed by the kings and nobles. Hazra is of the opinion that when power and prestige of the Vedic priests declined the Smārta brāhmaṇa sectaries tried to improve their economic condition through lawful means viz. the acceptance of gifts, priesthood teachership etc. "The first of these means being considered the best and more effective, the brāhmaṇas strain every nerve to urge the people to make gifts to themselves on any and every occasion."[3] Still, if we study the epigraphic records dealing with gifts we can have a good picture of the society.

The brāhmaṇas received as gifts money, gold, cows, lands and many other things granted according to the capacity of the donors. Gunji rock inscription of Kumāravīradatta (1st cent. A.D.) mentions that Praushṭhadatta, the *amātya*, *daṇḍanāyaka* and *balādhikṛita* granted 1000 cows to the brāhmaṇas at the time of his visit of Ṛishabhatīrtha. The same person made another gift of thousand cows on the 10th day of the bright half of the month of Jaishṭha. Another *amātya daṇḍanāyaka* Indradeva made a grant of the coverings of these cows.[4]

The Nasik cave inscription of the time of Nahapāna (2nd cent.) records that his son-in-law Ushabhadāta (or Ṛishashadatta) made grants of cows. golds and lands to the brāhmaṇas, as well as made gifts of wives to some of them.[5] This inscription provides a very good example of the nature of objects donated to the brāhmaṇas, which are echoed and highly recommended in the Purāṇas.

Land grants being written on permanent materials like copperplates, such documents have come down to us in large numbers[6] and help us in forming an idea about the donees and the occasions for such donations.

Land grants were made to individual brāhmaṇas, or to a number of them. In case of collective grant one among the donees received the grant on behalf of others. He came to be called *Pānigrāhi*, as according to the śāstric injunction, the donor was required to pour water in the hands of the donee before making any gift. There are some inscriptions which refer to the Pānigrāhis and distinguish them from other donees. The Dasgoba plates of the Eastern Gaṅga king Rājarāja III (12th cent.) mentions the pāniyagrāhin Vidyākarārya of Kauśika gotra who received the grant of lands from the king on behalf of all the donees. He seems to have been chief among them and received the greatest share.[7] The Asankhali plates of Narasiṁha II (14th cent) is more explicit in this regard. Lands were given by the king to no less than 104 brāhmaṇas of various gotras, so that the merit accruing to this pious act may lead his son Gaṇgarājadeva, who died a premature death, to heaven. All the donees have been referred to with the general expression *Pāṇi* (*niya*) *grāhi-mahājana*, but the chief amongst them, who received the grant on behalf of all, alone has the epithet *pāni* (*niya*) *grāhi* added to his name.[8] In course of time this was stereotyped as a family name and Pānigrāhi is not a common brāhmaṇical surname in Orissa, wherefrom the inscriptions under discussion have also been found. It is interesting that though in other parts of India also often lands were granted to a number of brāhmaṇas collectively, for some reasons or other, the term Pānigrāhi is peculiar only to Orissa.

The śāstrakāras enjoined that several astronomical days were fit occasions for gifts to be made. Gifts made on the *ayana* day, equinoctial day, on *saṁkrāntis*, on the eclipses of the Sun and Moon, on new moon and full moon days, *vyātipāta* and on several other *tithis* were considered meritorious. The occasions therefore, scientifically speaking, are some important points connected with the movement of the sun, moon and the stars in the sky. Sun's passage into a zodical sign, which is known as *Saṁkrānti* marks the end of one month and the beginning of another. On the saṁkrānti day of Vaiśākha the sun leaves the Mesha rāśi and enters the Vṛisha. In the same way the saṁkrāntis on the remaining eleven months are known as Mithuna, Karkaṭa, Siṁha, Kanyā, Tulā, Bṛiśchika, Dhanu, Makara, Kumbha, Mīna and Mesha saṁkrāntis respectively. When the sun crosses the equator on the equinoctal days, the duration of days and nights becomes equal. It takes place twice in the year—one it Summer (Chaitra) which is called *Mahāvishuva* and another in Autumn (Āśvina) which is known as *Jalavishuva.* In an agriculture based country like India where much depends on monsoon the months starting from Mahāvishuva are considered auspicious as they bring rain. The Chaitra saṁkrānti is therefore celebrated with festiveties. The Jalavishuva exhausts it. When the sun starts from the Mahāvishva gradually the hours of the day-time increase and on the Samkrānti day of Āshāḍa it in maximum. From this day onwards the light of the Sun decreases and it is said that the sun is now in his *Dakhiṇāyana.* The Sun moves in the opposite direction during *Uttarāyana* which starts on the samkrānti day of the month of Pausha. Uttarāyana ushers the Mahāvishuva and so in our country Pausha saṁkrānti or Makara saṁkrānti is considered especially auspicious. Uttarāyana brings rain, so in the inscriptions it has some times been referred to as *Udag-ayana.*[9]

Sun's movement can be calculated correctly by the astronomers, but even the common people can keep an account of the movement of the moon which waxes and wanes after fifteen days. So most of our ritualistic activities are connected with the passage of the moon and *Pūrṇimās* and *Amāvasyās* were especially noted. Vaiśākhī pūrṇima after the Mahavishuva, Śravaṇa-purnima after the Dakshiṇāyana, Kārttika-pūrṇima after the Jalavishuva and Māghī-pūrṇimā after the Uttarāyana were of special importance. People were afraid of dark amāvasyās and so ancestors were invoked to be pleased on every amāvasyā-day. But the period starting from the amāvaśyā of Āśvina has received special significance and is known as *pitṛipaksha*, when ablutions are offered to the manes.

The eclipses of the Sun and the Moon also appeared as striking to the ancient mind and they were considered as impure times, after which a man was recommended to purify himself.

Apart from these obvious abnormal days, several other occasions were created by the priests and different tithis were monopolised by the various existing sects. *Vyātipāta* is one such occasion. When the moon is in the constellation of Śrāvaṇas Aśvinī, Dhanishṭha, Ādrā, Aśleshā (first quarter) and when amāvasyā falls on Sunday it is called Vyātipāta. Suppression of the tithis were also noticed. Of the various tithis shashṭhī is associated with the sect of Kārttikeya, saptamī with the Sauras, ashṭami and dvādaśī with the Vaishṇavas. They usually fall in the bright fortnight. Chaturdaśī of the dark fortnight and amāvashyās are connected with the Śaivas and the Śāktas. The inherent philosophy of each sect seems to have played its part in choosing different tithis for the perspective sect.

Inscriptions will show that grants were actually made to brāhmaṇas on several of these occasions and on some other additional tithis. Examples may be cited starting from the Uttarāyana. The Sumandala copper-plate records the grant of a village by Dharmarāja, a feudatory of Pṛithivī-vigraha (6th cent.) in favour of a number of brāhmaṇas on the occasion of Uttarāyana.[10] The Vunna Guravayapalem plates of the Pallava king Parameśvaravarman (7th cent.) refers to grant of land to Devaśarman of Maudgalya gotra and Āpastamba sūtra on this occasion.[11]

The Uttarāyana-saṁkrānti is also known as Pausha saṁkranti or Makara-saṁkrānti and these names are also found in inscriptions. The Nesareka grant of the Rāshṭrakūta king Govinda III records the grant to a number of brāhmaṇas on the Pausha saṁkrānti.[12] The Pendrabandh Plates of Pratāpamalla records that the king donated a village to Satyasādhārana of Parāśara gotra on the occasion of Makara-Saṁkrāti.[13]

It has not been possible to collect any inscription mentioning gifts on the occasion of Kumbha saṁkranti. The Nagari plates of the Eastern Gaṅga king Anaṅgabhīma I (12th cent) refers to the grant of lands to Saṅkarohaṇānandaśarman of Gṛitakauśika gotra and Kāṇva śākhā on the occasion of Mīna saṁkranti, when the king took his sacred bath in the Mahānadī.[14]

The Chaitra saṁkrānti which equates with the Mahāvishuva was an auspicious occasion for making gifts to brāhmaṇas. The Nasik plates of Dharāsryaya-Jayasiṁha speaks of grant of lands in favour of brāhmaṇa Trivikrama of the Bharadvāja gotra and Vājasaneya charaṇa, on the occasion of the Vishuva which fell on the 10th tithi of the bright fortnight of Chaitra.[15]

Records of gifts on Vṛisha and Mithuna saṁkrāntis are not known to me.

The Karkata saṁkrānti which equates with the Dakshiṇāyana is again a fit occasion to make gifts. Bhandak copper-plates of the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Kṛishṇarāja I (8th cent.) records the grant of land to the Bhaṭṭanaka of the temple of Āditya at Udumbvara-monti on the 3rd day of the dark half of Āshāḍa on the occasion of Karkaṭa saṁkrānti.[16] The Western Chālukya king Viṇayāditya Satyāśraya granted some lands to a brāhmaṇa at the time of Dakshiṇāyana.[17]

The Somavaṁśī king Mahābhavaguptarāja granted lands to a brāhmaṇa of Kapishṭhala gotra and Maitrāyaṇīya śākhā on the occasion of Siṁha saṁkrānti.[18]

The Kamauli copper-plate grant issued by a feudatory of Govindachandra of Kanauj records the donation of lands on the occasion of Kanyā-saṁkranti to Ṭhakkura Dalhuśarman of Vatsa-Bhārgava gotra.[19]

Tulā-saṁkranti which equates with the Jalavishuva is referred to the Anjaneoi plates of Jayabhaṭa III.[20] Brāhmaṇa Nārāyaṇa of Śāndilya gotra and Kauthuma śākhā received land grant from the king on the occasion of Tulā-saṁkrānti which fell on the 11th tithi of the dark fortnight of Aśvayuja.

Vṛiśchika and Dhanu saṁkrāntis are not of any special import and grant of lands on such occasions were not common.

To conclude therefore, of the twelve saṁkrantis those of the ayanas and vishuvas were most important occasions for gifts to be made.

So far as Pūrṇimās are concerned we have noted that those of Vaiśakha, Śrāvaṇa, Kārttika and Māgha are more important and there are epigraphic records to show that grants were specially made on these days, though grants on some other pūrṇimās are also known.

Ragolu plates of the Mathura king Śaktivarman speak of donations of land in favour of brāhmaṇa Kumāraśarman by the king on the fullmoon tithi of Vaiśākha. This auspicious tithi was selected for the coronation of the king.[21]

Mahārāja Lakshmaṇa donated some lands to brāhmaṇa Revatisvāmin of Kautsa gotra and a student of the Vājasaneya-Mādhyandina śākhā on the full moon day of the month of Jaishṭha for the increase of merits of his parents and of himself.[22]

The Gahaḍavāla king Govindachandra granted lands to his purohita Jaguśarman on the full-moon tithi of Srāvaṇa of the yr. 1200 V.S. after bathing in the Ganges. Two years ago on the same tithi he granted lands to Vyāsa, the brother of this Mahāpurohita.[23]

Govindachandra in 1162 V.S. granted lands to Vishakaya Dīkshita of Vandhula gotra after taking his bath in the Ganges on the full moon day of Kārttika.[24]

Govindachandra in 1175 v.s. took a bath in the Ganges on the full moon tithi of the month of Māgha, and made gift of land in favour of his purohita Jaguśarman.[25]

The Penukonda plates of the Western Gaṅga king Mādhava II records the donation of a village to Kumāraśarman of Vatsa gotra on the full moon day of the month of Chaitra.[26]

Gifts on amāvasyā and on the new moon day are said to bring high reward. The *Matsya Purāṇa* narrates the story of king Sila of the Pururava dynasty who used to go to heaven on the amāvasyā day of every month and performed *tarpaṇā* to the *pitṛis* with nectar taken from the moon.[27] Dharwar plates of the time of Siṁhaṇa record the grant of lands in favour of several brāhmaṇas, temples etc. Among the heads on which the property of the temple can be spent one is *pitṛiparvan*, which probably means *śrāddha* or *dāna* on each amāvasyā day.[28] A mutilated inscription speaks of Vishṇu-śrāddha which also might have meant the same thing.[29] The gifts in amāvasyās are said to bring peace and prosperity. The Kadamba king Sashṭhadeva II (13th cent) granted a village on Pushya amāvasyā, to Lakshmīdhara and his brothers of Ātreya gotra, for the prosperity of the kingdom.[30]

In the Vedic period also Darśapaurnamāsa sacrifices were performed on the Amāvasyā and Purnimā days.

People are recommended to take baths and make gifts to brāhmaṇas after the eclipses of the Sun and the Moon. The Somavaṁśī king Mahā-Bhavagupta is known to have granted lands to a brāhmaṇa on the occasion of an eclipse of the Sun.[31] Nilgund inscription of the time of Taila II (10th cent.) records that Śobhana, a feudatory of the king made a grant of lands to Vishṇubhaṭṭa of Viśvāmitra gotra on the occasion of a solar eclipse for the purpose of establishing an alms house. On the same occasion another lady granted a house for feeding twelve brāhmaṇas daily from the money accruing from that.[32]

Koneki grant of Vishṇuvardhana II (7th cent.) records the grant of a village to Viduśarman of Parāśara gotra on the occasion of a lunar eclipse in the month of Māgha for longevity, success and prosperity.[33] Reyuru grant of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman II (8th cent.) speaks of the somayājī brāhmaṇa Kumāramaṇḍaśarman, who was a scholar of Veda, Vedāṅga, Itihāsa and Purāṇas, who received donations from the king on the full moon day of Vaiśākha on the occasion of a lunar eclipse.[34]

Mehunabara plates of Sendraka chief Vairadeva (8th cent.) refers to a gift made to Nāgaśarman on the occasion of Śrāvaṇa Saṁkrānti and Vyātipāta.[35] The Sindā chief Nāgāditya, a vassal of the Western Chālukyas (11th cent) granted a field to Āchārya Paratraya-siṁha-rāsibhaṭṭa on a sunday of some unspecified era combining Uttarāyana saṁkānti and Vyātipata-yoga, for the maintenance of the god Sindeśvara.[36]

The Konkuduru plates of Allaya-Dodda (15th cent.) record the grant of lands to a number of brāhmaṇas belonging to various gotras and charaṇas at the time of *Ardhodaya* in the month of Pausha in the S.E. 1352.[37] Ardhodaya takes place on the new-moon tithi of the amānta Pausha, when during the day time the nakshatra is Śrāvaṇa and the *yoga* Vyātipāta. The tithi falls on the Sunday. This is regarded as most auspicious conjunction for making donations.

Of the different other tithis on which grants were made to brāhmaṇas of the following are referred to in inscriptions:

(1) *Akshaya-tṛitīyā*—It falls on the third tithi of bright fortnight of the month of Vaiśākha. Amoda copper-plates of Pṛithvīdeva II records the grant of a village to the three sons of Devaśarman on the occasion of Akshaya-tṛitīya.[38] The Gagaḍavala kings Govindachandra and Madanapāla are known to have made grants to brāhmaṇas on the occasions of Akshaya-tṛitīyā.[39] Dibbida plates of Arjuna on the Matsya dynasty (13th cent.) says that the king granted lands to twenty brāhmaṇas on one such occasion.[40]

(2) *Agasti-tṛitīyā*—It falls in the dark fortnight of that month of Bhadra. The Madanpur copper-plate of Srichandra of Bengal records that the king made a gift of lands to brāhmaṇa Śakradeva on the occasion of Agasti-tṛitīyā, though the charter was formally executed later.[41]

(3) *Vijaya-saptamī*—Torkhede copper-plate grant of the time of Govindarāja of Gujarat records the donation of a village to several brāhmaṇa donees on the Vijayasaptamī tithi which fell on the seventh of the bright fortnight of the month of Pausha.[42]

(4) *Ratha-saptamī*—The 7th tithi of the bright fortnight of Māgha is sacred to the sun and is called the Ratha-saptamī tithi. The Gurjara king Dadda III (7th cent.) was a devotee of Śiva but the teutalary deity of his family was the sun. In the S.F.F. 427 on the occasion of Ratha-saptami he made a grant of land to a Chaturvedī brāhmaṇa of the Bharadvāja gotra and a student of the Ṛigveda.[43] The Gahaḍvāla king Jayacandra in samvat 1228 made a grant of village to the Mahāpurohita Praharājaśarman on the Ratha-saptamī tithi after bathing at the confluence of rivers at Prayāga.[44]

(5) *Utthāna-dvādaśī*—Dvādaśī as a tithi is of auspicious import to the Vaishṇavas. But there are some dvādaśīs which are not connected with them. The Utthāna dvādaśī, however, is intimately associated with them. It is said that Vishṇu goes to sleep on the 11th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āshāḍa and wakes up after four months on the 11th of the bright fortnight of Kārttika, known as the *prabodhani ekādaśī*. The following day is therefore celebrated with festivities. Suvira Jaiswal has rightly shown that it was an ancient festival connected with the sowing and reaping of paddy and sugarcane, which was adopted by the neo-Vaishṇavas and assimilated with their own religion.[45] The Eran stone pillar inscription records the dedication of a flag-staff in honour of Vishṇu, not of land grants in favour of brāhmaṇa, by Mahārāja Mātrivishṇu on the 12th of the bright fortnight of Āshāḍa.[46] There are several inscriptions starting from the Gupta period down to the time of the Vijayanagara kings which speak of land grants to brāhmaṇas on the auspicious tithi of Utthāna-dvādaśī. The Poona copper-plate inscription of Prabhāvatīgupta records the grant of land to Ācārya Chanālasvāmin on the 12th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Kārttika.[47] The Vijayanagara king Venkaṭapatideva (16th cent.) granted lands to 118 brāhmaṇas of various gotras on the occasion of Utthāna-dvādaśī tithi.[48]

The last day of the festival connected with Utthāna-dvādaśī was the full-moon-day of the month, which was known as the Mahākārttiki tithi. It is interesting to note that this being a festivity of the common agricultural mass, this was claimed as their own tithi by the Śaivas also. They performed a festival on this tithi in honour of Śiva's victory over Tripurāsura. The Goharisa plates of the Kalacuri king Karṇadeva mention that the king made a grant in favour of a donee on the mahā-Kārttiki-tithi after worshipping Śiva.[49]

(6) *Śakrotthāna*—The Howraghat plates of Valavarman II of Kāmarūpa record the grant of lands of Śyāmadeva of Aupamanyava gotra and Kāṇva śākhā on the occasion of Śakrotthāna festival which took place in the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra.[50]

Each and every dvija (viz. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣhatriya and Vaiśya) was expected to do several Saṁskāras and on these occasions gifts were made to brāhmaṇas according to the ability of the householder.

The birth of a child, particularly of the son, was acclaimed with joy in every family and some ceremonies were performed for the welfare of the new born baby. It was a fit occasion to make gifts to brāhmaṇas. A charter of the Gahaḍavāla king Jayacandra records that at the *jātakarmaṇ* (or birth ceremony when the navel string is divided) of his son, the king after bathing in the Ganges at Kāśi made the gift of a village to the Purōhita Praharājaśarman. The grant was made on the 8th tithi of the dark of Bhādrapada.[51]

At the time of giving a name (*nāmakarmaṇ*) to this son Hariścandra, Jayacandra made another gift.[52]

Jayacandra made other grants in favour of Mahāsāndhivigrahika Bhāṇḍāgārika Ravidhara of Vatsa gotra and Lakṣhmīdhara of the same family on the occasion of *jātotsava* of Hariścandra, which probably refers to some festivals relating to prince's birth.[53] It is on the 10th August 1175 that the *jātakarmaṇ* of Hariścandra took place, on the 31st August, he was named and on 29th September some festivities took place on account of his birth. This Ravidhara presented to the prince 3 mūdris decked with diamonds and rubies. This pleased the king so much that he made some grant of land in favour of Ravidhara. This brāhmaṇa was very shrewd and Gahaḍavāla inscriptions show that he was able to manage several land grants from the king. In some inscriptions he has been called Rāuta which led D. C. Sircar to suggest that he was raised to the status of nobility from a mere officer of the king.[54]

The day when the son takes his first rice is celebrated with festivities. We have one inscription to show that lands were granted to brāhmaṇas on this great occasion. The Eluru grant of Sarvalōkāśraya Mangi-Yuvarāja (7th cent.) records that the king donated some lands at the village of Eluru (modern Ellore) to brāhmaṇa Śrīdharaśarman of the Bharadvāja gotra on the occasion of the Annaprāśana of his son Vishṇuvardhana III.[55]

Not only the birth of a child was celebrated with joy, but we have at least one inscription to show that kings celebrated the anniversary of their own birth-day also. The Edilpur copper-plate of Keśavaseva records that the king made a grant in favour of Nītipāṭhaka Īśvaradevaśarman for the increase of the Śubha-varsha, i.e. the year of birth, and for the long life of the king.[56] The *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* enjoins that not only the king but all should celebrate a festival on the birth-day and should honour and worship the gods, manes, elders and brāhmaṇas.[57]

The marriage ceremony was an important function, celebrated with pomp and joy. Sudava copper-plates of Anantavarman, son of Devendravarman, record that the king at the request of his brother Jayavarman, made the grant of a village Tatatthera situated in the district of Kroshtukavarttani (mod. Chicacole) to the learned brāhmaṇa Vishṇusomāchārya of the Parāśara gotra, who hailed from Srimgatikāgrahāra in the Kāmarūpavishaya. The gift was made at the time of marriage (vivāha-samaye) on the occasion of *Kanyā-dānāni*.[58] If the Kāmarūpa-vishaya is identified with modern Assam this inscription is of interest from both political and social points of view.

The kings not only made gifts to brāhmaṇas at the time of marriage, but also made the brāhmaṇas get married and settle as householders. This is said to secure for him that bliss which a man does not gain even by observance of agnihotra or the performance of agnishṭoma (Daksha III 30-33). The Apsad inscription of Ādityasena records the grant of agrahāras by the king Dāmodaragupta on the occasion of marriages of hundred brāhmaṇas.[59] The Silāhara prince Gandaraditya made sixteen brāhmaṇas get married and granted 3 nivartanas of land to each for their maintenance, at the time of marriage.[60]

Śrādha is another important saṁskāra at the time of which gifts were made. Grants could also be made after that for the increase of merit of the deceased. The Asankhali plates of Narasiṁha II (14th cent.) records that the king with his wife visited the temple of goddess Gaṅgā at Bhairavapura and there on behalf of queen Hīrādevī, the king made grants of land in favour of gods and brāhmaṇas for the increase of merit of his dead son Gaṅgarājadeva.[61] The Russelkondo plates of Neṭṭabhañja records the grant of a village to certain brāhmaṇas for the easy access to heaven of the queens, and the rājaputri Meghāvalīdevī.[62] Ƙarṇadeva made a grant on the occasion of the *Samvatsara śrādha* of his father Gāṅgeyadeva at Triveṇi. The donee was paṇḍit Viśvarūpa of Ƙauśika gotra & Vājasaneya śākhā.[63] The Kamauli copper-plate of Govindacandra, dated 1174 V.S., says that while the king was at Vevasthāna, on the 15th of the dark half of Āśvina popularly known as *pitṛipakṣha*, made the grant of a village to purōhita Jāguśarman, at the annual funeral ceremony performed at the new moon time in honour of his father.[64] The Rewa plates of the time of Jayasiṁha records the grant of a village by Mahārāṇaka Kīrttivarman on the occasion of offering oblations to his deceased father. The donees were Ṭhakuras Mahāditya and Sīlaṇa of the Kauśikagotra and three pravaras.[65]

The ceremonies connected with initiations to certain religious rites were sublime in character, on the occasion of which the brāhmaṇa *guru* was honoured with gift. Amundalapadu plates of Vikramāditya I, the Cālukya king (7th cent.) records that the king made the grant of land in payment of *guru-dakṣhiṇā* to his preceptor Śūdra-śivācārya who initiated him in *śivamaṇḍala-dīkṣhā*.[66] It is interesting that the initiation ceremony did not take place in the capital, but the king had to come for this to the village of Marrua, where probably his preceptor lived. The *dīkṣhā* took place on the auspicious day of Vaiśākha-paurṇamāsi. The Eastern Gaṅga king Devendravarman on the occasion of termination of the *dīkṣhā* granted a village to his learned brāhmaṇa teacher Pataṅga-Śivācārya.[67] A charter of Vijayacandra is more interesting in this respect. It informs that mahārājaputra Jayacandradeva was installed in the dignity of Yuvarāja and was endowed with all royal prepogatives, on the 10th tithi of the bright half of the month of Āshāḍa, on the occasion of being initiated as the worshipper of the god Kṛishṇa. Thus two important ceremonies were combined and on that august occasion the king granted the village Haripura to the Mahāpurōhita Praharājaśarman, the preceptor of the performance of the Krishṇa worship (*pūja-vidhi-gurave*).[68]

There grew up a custom of committing religious suicide at some holy place and at the point of death donations of land, cattle, gold, silver or other things were made according to one's own ability. Several Indian kings also died in the same fashion. The Cāṇdella king Dhaṅga, the Cālukya king Someśvara I, the Sena king Ballālasena are known to have died in this way. The Rakshaskhali grant of Dommaṇapāladeva also records the gift of land to Mahārāṇaka Vāsudevaśarman of Varadhinasaggote and a student of Kāṇva śākhā on the place of his salvation (*Mukti-kshetra*).[69]

So far as the kings are concerned grants were made on several other occasions connected with the royal throne. For example, the day on which he was anointed was very auspicious for a king; on the occasion of which lands were granted by him. The Kalegaon plates of the Yādava king Mahādeva (13th cent.) mentions that the king on the occasion of his coronation made the gift of a village in favour of fifty-two brāhmaṇas, with the belief that it would lead to the prosperity and expansion of his kingdom. It is interesting that the gift village was renamed on this occasion as Paṭṭavārdhanapura.[70] The date of *Paṭṭabhanadhana* of the king was celebrated every year with festivities. Two grants of Indrarāja III, the Rāshṭrakūṭa king of Mānyakheṭa (10th cent.) have been found from Gujarat. They record that the king went to Kurundaka from his capital for the Paṭṭabhandhana festival, where he was weighed against gold and 20,50,000 of drammas were distributed among the brāhmaṇas. On that occasion the king made a gift of Kurundaka and other villages, granted afresh 400 villages resumed by previous rulers and finally bestowed the village of Thenna in Lāṭa to Prabhākarabhaṭṭa (charter no. 1) and Siddhapabhaṭṭa (charter no. 2), both of whom belonged to Lakshmaṇa gotra and Vājī-Mādhyandina śākhā.[71] The Govindapur copper-plate of Lakshmaṇasena records the grant of land issued on the occasion of the coronation of the king in favour of Upādhyāya Vyāsadevaśarma of Vatsya gotra and Kauthuma śākhā. The actual charter, however, was issued years later.[72]

Some royal grants are associated with their conquests of kingdoms. The Paramāra king Bhoja is known to have made a grant of 100 nivartanas of land in the Vaṭapadraka village during the *Koṅkana-vijaya-parva*. The donee was Bhaila of Vaśishṭha gotra and a student of the Vājī-Mādhyandina śākhā.[73] After seven months of issuing this charter the same king made another grant to celebrate the *Konkana-vijay-grahana-parva*.[74] D. Sharma suggests that the former grant (i.e. Banswara grant) was made on the day when the Paramāra army started for Koṅkana and the Betma grant was issued to celebrate the conquest over Koṅkana.[75]

Apart from land grants the inscriptions speak of several *Mahādānas* in favour of brāhmaṇas made on any of the occasions mentioned above. According to the Purāṇas the Tulāpurusha is the best of the Mahādānas. "It is giver of virtue, long life, dispeller of all ills, venerated by lords Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva and other Devas."[76] In this Mahādāna the donor was weighed against gold, which was then distributed among the brāhmaṇas and others. The Rāshṭrakūṭa king Indrarāya II performed the Tulāpurushamahādāna on the occasion of his paṭṭavandhana festival.[77] The Gahaḍavāla kings Govindacandra and Jayacandra are also known to have performed Tulāpurusha mahādāna. Jayacandra made this gift on the full-moon tithi of the month of Kārttika after bathing in the Ganges and in the presence of god Kirttivāsa and on this occasion granted a village to nine brāhmaṇas. Half of it became the property of his spiritual instructor, their family priest Praharājaśarman and the rest was shared by eight others, who included Dvivedīs, Tripāṭhis and Dīkshitas.[78] Kṛishṇarāya of Vijayanagara is also known to have performed this mahādāna.[79]

Hiraṇyagarbhamahādānā is another of the great gifts mentioned in inscription. The golden vessel called hiraṇyagarbha is the symbolic representation of the creator. The donor's emergence from it is taken for his second birth with a divine body by dispelling all his early sins. Dāmodaravarman (4th cent. A.D.) of the Ānanda dynasty was a follower of Buddha, but he claims to have performed Hiraṇyagarbha mahādāna. His father Attivarman also made this gift.[80] The Sañjan plates of Amoghavarsha mentions that his father Dantidurga performed this mahādāna at Ujjain.[81] The Nāgarī plates of Anaṅgabhīma III records several gifts made by the king on different occasions. One among them was the Hiraṇyagarbhamahādāna. It was made on the occasion of a solar eclipse on the karkatakamāvasyā, while the king was on a pilgrimage to Purushottamakshetra. A grant of three vāṭakas of land was made in favour of Ācārya Agnicit Kayadiśarman of the Kātyāyana gotra and of the Kāṇva śākhā. Some other brāhmaṇas of various gotras who served as *ṛitvikas* on this occasion also received two *vāṭakas* of land.[82]

The Mettepad plates of Dāmodaravarman (4th cent A.D.) speak of the king's performance of the Gosahasramahādāna.[83] It is according to the *Matsya purāṇa* "the dispeller of all great sins and the yielder of all desires. It is said that the manes also eagerly look forward for a son or grandson who would liberate them by the gift of 1,000 cows.[84]

Vilāsadevi, the mother of Ballālasena of Bengal performed the Hemāśvamahādāna on the occasion of a solar eclipse and a village was granted at that time as a fee to the preceptor Vasudevaśarmaṇ of Bharadvāja gotra and a student of the Kauthuma śākha.[85] The golden horse was also apparently given to the *guru* as prescribed by the Dharmaśāstras.

Tarpandighi copper-plate of Lakshmṇasena, the son of Ballalasena, records that the Hemāśvaratha mahādāna and on that occasion lands were granted to Īśvaradevaśarman of Bharadvāja gotra and Kauthuma śākhā, for officiating as a priest in that mahādāna.[86]

Srirangam plates of Devarāya II of Vijayanagara records that the king gave dinner to one lakh of brāhmaṇas at Prayāga on the occasion of a lunar eclipse when he performed the Pañcalāngala-vrata.[87] The Purāṇas also mention an eclipse as the occasion when pañcalāṅgala ordinance can be made.

The *Matsya-Purāṇa* speaks of sixteen mahādānas, of which only a few are recorded in inscriptions. Though not a mahādāna, Dānasāgara is another great gift. The Nagari plates of Anaṅgabhīmā mention that the king made several gifts on different occasions in accordance with in recommendations of sacred texts. He performed a Dānasāgara in 1151 Ś.E. as advised by the *Mahābhārata*, at the time of Mīna-saṁkrānti, when he made a number of gifts. He performed another Dānasāgara in the following year, now according to the Vishṇudharmothara on the occasion of Makara-amāvasyā. On the first occasion the donee was Samkarshaṇānandaśarman of Ghṛitakauśika gotra and the Kāṇva śākhā; second time Devaśarman of Bharadvāja gotra received the grant.[88]

So far as the gifts are concerned we may divide the occasions when they were made in two categories. One is connected with pure natural phenomena and the other is associated with events of the donor's personal life. The occasions for gifts of first category are very old. They show how "the priests were interested in the supernaturalism and mystification of nature."[89] But gifts of the second category are of special importance because they appear in inscriptions in large number from the post-Gupta days only.

The inscriptions of late period show that brāhmaṇas associated with the king and his court became gradually the recipients of gifts made on various occasions. Most of the gifts of the Gahaḍavālas, for example, were made in favour of their family priests. Twenty-one copper-plates of the Gahaḍavālas of Kanauj were published *en-block* in *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, which may be analysed for our purpose. 14 of these plates recorded grants of Govindacandra, 1 of his son Vijayacandra and 6 of his grandson Jayacandra. Of the 14 copper-plates of Govindachandra 12 record donations of lands in favour of the purōhita Jaguśarman, 1 in favour of his brother Vyāsa and only one went to another brāhmaṇa, outside the family of Jaguśarman. Jaguśarman was succeeded in his office by his son Praharājaśarman, who served both Vijayacandra and Jayacandra. All the seven remaining records mention this purōhita Praharājaśarman as an exclusive donee or as one of the donees of the gifted lands.[90] At the root of this was perhaps the Tāntrikas who ignored priesthood and said that if the help and co-operation of anybody were needed for spiritual upliftment, he was the preceptor, to whom the gifts should go. Apart from the priest other brāhmaṇa officials of king also received the grants, just as in modern days we feed members of the brāhmaṇa caste, on various occasions, irrespective of their avocations. To take instances from the Gahaḍavālas again, Jayaccandra of this family made donations of lands to Ravidhara of Vatsa gotra, who was his *mahā-sāndhivigrahika* and *bhāṇḍāgārika*, on several occasions. D.C. Sircar edited six inscriptions of this king in *Epigraphia Indica*. Vol. XXXV and interestingly enough all of them record grants in favour of Ravidhara, who was raised to the status of Rāuta after some time.[91] This is the result of the teaching of the Purāṇas and some of the Dharmaśāstras that the brāhmaṇa, irrespective of his character and learning, is to be honoured. This lowered the concept of brāhmaṇism and speaks of the degeneration of society.

In the early inscriptions primary aim behind land grants was establishment of brāhmaṇa-settlements, where they would devote their times in study and sacrifices. But the motive behind the gifts from early mediaeval period onwards being mainly personal, the land-grants lost their purpose and many of them being in favour of persons associated with the court true brāhmaṇic settlements often did not grow up in these donated lands. On the other hand, when members of the same family became recipients of land-grants on various occasions and in successive reigns, they created un-equal distribution of land and led to the growth of semi-feudal lords.

Charters issued from the early mediaeval period onwards show that public property was now given as gifts on absolutely private occasions of kings like the birth of their sons, marriage of their daughters etc. Lack of vigilence on the part of the subjects is responsible for this and it is well known that public vigilence is the very backbone of a healthy society.

PART II—GIFTS MADE BY THE BRĀHMAṆAS (DĀNA)

The śāstrakāras had a high ideal in view for the brāhmaṇas. They should be modest and should realize that they are bound in ties of indebtedness with all the living souls of this world. In their apex of pride and glory they should not forget the gods and the manes. This was symbolized in the concept of *pañcha-mahāyajña*, which a pious brāhmaṇa was enjoined to perform every day. The *pañcha-mahāyajñas*, so called to glorify them, were—Brahmayajña, Pitṛiyajña, Devayajña, Bhutayajña and Nṛiyajña. The quest for Brahma should be the goal of the life of a brāhmaṇa and learning helped to that. So he should devote at least certain portion of the day in study and thus perform the Brahmayajña. He discharged his debts to the *pitṛis* and the *devas* by the performances of Pitṛi and Devayajñas every day. The debt towards the animals were discharged by giving them food every day and this was known as the Bhutayajña. Guests should be entertained and food should be given to them and thus the Nṛiyajña is performed. The *pañcha-mahāyajñas* helped the brāhmaṇas in building their character. They told the brāhmaṇas what should be their aim in life. They should not run after the mundane things. They should not be always on the receiving part only. They have some duties to others also.

With this may be connected the concept of dāna. A brāhmaṇa could receive gifts from others in order to increase the merit of the donee. But as his ideal was not in the accumulation of property, he on his part would distribute the same to others, keeping for himself only that much which would help him in the performances of *pañcha-mahāyajñas* and other duties assigned to him by śāstra. Accordingly we find in the inscriptions that the brāhmaṇas also made gifts to different persons or institutions on various occasions. The early inscriptions of the Gupta period provide several instances of donations by brāhmaṇas in favour of temples of various sectarian gods. The Bilsad stone inscription of the time of Kumāragupta is in fact an eulogy of brehmaṇa Dhruvaśarman, who adorned the temple of Svāmi Mahāsena by some constructions like gateways, an abode of saints *[guṇa-vara bhavanaṁ]*, a religious alm-house *[dharmma-sattram]* and a *dhvaja.*[92] The Tusam rock inscription (c. 5th cent.) records the construction of two reservoirs and a house for the use of god Vishṇu by Ācārya Somatrāta of Gautama Gotra, who was a teacher of the Yoga philosophy.[93] The Indor copper-plate of the time of Skandagupta records that the brāhmaṅa Devavishṇu made an endowment for the maintenance of a lamp in the Sun-temple at Indrapura.[94] This tradition of making donations in favour of temples continued in later period also. The Kolagallu inscription of the time of the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Khoṭṭiga (10th cent.) speaks of brāhmaṇa Gadādhara of Śāṇḍilya gotra who constructed a temple of Kumāra. Besides, this Gadādhara is said to have installed the Sun, Brahmā, Vishṇu, Maheśvara, Pārvatī and Vināyaka and constructed a tank and a monastery.[95] Brāhmaṇa Somarāja of Kṛishṇātreya gotra constructed a temple of Śiva at Mallar during the reign of the Kalachuri king Jājalladeva II (12th cent.).[96] The Sahavāsi brāhmaṇa Lokaṇa Nāyaka built a *maṭha.* His wife added a *sattra* to it. His son made donations for the maintenance of this *sattra* and for feeding the students who learnt the Vedas in this *maṭha.*[97] Such examples may be multiplied.

Now we shall turn to another kind of gifts. The kings and the nobles made grants of lands to the brāhmaṇas on various occasions. There are epigraphic records to show that there were among the donees such brāhmaṇas who disposed away major share of lands doated to them in favour of other brāhmaṇas. The Anudalapadu plates of Vikramāditya I (7th cent.) records the grant of a village by the king in favour of his *guru* Śudraśivācārya. He on his part distributed the same among twenty-seven other brāhmaṇas.[98] The Sudava copper-plates of Devendravarman speak of his brāhmaṇa *guru* Pataṅga Śivācārya, to whom the king donated the village of Haduvaka on the occasion of his dīkshā, but who gave away half of the village to the god Yogeśvara-bhāṭṭāraka, and the other half was distributed among his disciples and disciples' disciples.[99]

These two Ācāryās were ascetics and naturally they had no desire for wealth. But there were common brāhmaṇa householders who also did in the same way. A village was granted by Vishṇuvardhana II (7th cent.) in favour of Viduśaraman of Parāśara gotra and Āpastamba sūtra. Having received the village Viduśarman distributed it among fifteen persons, keeping apart six shares as *devabhoga*. It may be noted that the donee was a scholar in Brāhmaṇa, Sūtra, Mantra, Tantra, Upanishad and others. His father also was well-versed in the Vadas.[100] Vilasa grant of Prolaya-Nāyaka (14th cent.) also gives the same picture. The king granted a village to a brāhmaṇa of Bhardavāja gotra, who was reluctant to receive it because "he was accustomed to make gifts rather than take them." But at the request of the king he received it, later to be divided among several other learned brāhmaṇas.[101]

There are other types of inscriptions wherefrom we come to know that brāhmaṇa householders often settled new brāhmaṇa families in their own lands. On the occasion of Uttarāyana the Bhauma-kara queen Daṇḍimahādevī granted a village to Bhaṭṭaputra Purushottama of Kāśyapa gotra and a student of the Kāṇva Śākhā. The donee on his turn made a gift of half of the village to Bhaṭṭaputra Ravika of the Kauśika gotra.[102] The Bangaon copper-plate of the time of Vigrahapāla III records that brāhmaṇa Ghaṇtiśa granted out of his own lands a plot of land to settle there Ghāṇṭukaśarman, a brāhmaṇa of Śāṇḍilya gotra.[103]

A still earlier inscription from Faridpur and belonging to the time of Gopachandra of Bengal (6th cent.) informs that Vatsapālasvāmin desired to purchase some lands in the existing price rate for bestowing to virtuous Bhaṭṭa Gomidattasvāmin, who was of Lauhitya gotra and a student of the Vājasaneya śākhā.[104]

Man loves himself more than his property. So it was suggested that among the gifts of all kinds the best is the gift of one's own self. As a consequence we notice that religious suicide in sacred places was highly praised, though suicide committed out of frustration was deemed as a sin. A 10th century inscription from Maihar (M.P.) mentions that one brāhmaṇa Dāmodara of Vasta gotra commited suicide by drawing himself in the waters of the sea after having seen Purushottama in the Odra country.[105] The Sarkho plates of Ratnadeva, the Kalachuri king, speaks of a brāhmaṇa of Vatsa gotra who died by fasting in the Jambuvat tīrha, which was somewhere in the vicinity of modern Sabarmati.[106] It is noteworthy that instances of religious suicide are not found in early inscriptions upto the 7th-8th centuries A.D. This negative approach to life goes well with the character of a decadent society, who had nothing positive to contribute.

The picture of the ideal brāhmaṇa, as is painted above, however, does not give the whole story. The number of ideal brāhmaṇas was certainly few. Most of the land-grants bestowed on the brāhmaṇas were appropriated by them. Often one brāhmaṇa or brāhmaṇa family became owner of large holding by such donations. Mention has already been made in the previous section of the family of Purohitas of the Gahaḍavāla kings, who received land-grants on several occasions and in successive reigns.

There were other types of greedy brāhmaṇas who even dared to forge royal charters in their own names. The spurious Gaya inscription of Samudragupta speaks of one Gopadevasvāmin of Bharadvāja gotra, who apparently forged the charter in his favour.[107] The forged documents which have come down to us escaped the notice of the government officers and brāhmaṇas mentioned therein must have enjoined the property in good pleasure. But sometimes such foregeries were detected. The Madhuvan copper-plate of Harshavardhana speaks of a brāhmaṇa Vāmarathya who enjoyed a plot of land on the basis of a forged character. On detection he was deprived of his holding, which was now given to two donees. Bhaṭṭa Vatsasvamin of Sāvarṇi gotra and Chhandoga charaṇa and Bhaṭṭa Śivadevasvāmī of Vishṇuvṛiddha gotra, who was a student of the Bahvṛicha śākhā.[108] The Tarachandi Rock inscription of Pratāpadhavala (12th cent.) is very interesting in this respect.[109] It mentions that the brāhmaṇas of Suvarnahala obtained a forged grant, recording the donation of two villages, Kalahandi and Vadayila, by bribing Deu who was an officer of the Gahaḍavāla king Vijayachandra. The forgery was detected and the king by this record warned his descendants of the characters of the brāhmaṇas of Suvarnahala, who have been expressly called here, "lampataḥ". The king asked his successors to collect all the dues from the villages of Kalahandi and Vadayila collectable as *bhāga* (king's share of the produce in the village fields) and *bhoga* (periodical offerings payable to the king). Fortunately for us the forged charter which was the subject matter of this rock inscription has also been discovered.[110] It shows how a number of brāhmaṇas conspired in farming this forged document. It not only casts a glance on the character of the brāhmaṇas but also on the age. The Gahaḍavāla kings granted lands to brāhmaṇas on any and every occasions, and the brāhmaṇas of Suvarnahala perhaps thought in such circumstance their forged document would escape the eyes of the officers, particularly when one of them was a party in the conspiracy. Land by now became the only source of wealth and of prestige. Naturally there was a hankering for land and the forged document of the time of Vijayachandra is a product of that. We had evidence of individual brāhmaṇa forgers, earlier, now we come across a community of brāhmaṇa forgers, who were unscrupulous to the extreme.

Reference

1. Kane. *H.D.*, II, pt. II, p. 842.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 848.
3. H.C. Hazra, *Purāṇic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs* p. 246.
4. *SI*, I, p. 223
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-169.
6. Romila Thapar has shown that during the Rig-vedic period land was not given as gifts. It was with the extension of the agrarian economy during the Mauryan and post-Mauryan period that gifting of lands began to take precedence over other items of gifts. Cf. Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History*, pp. 105-119.
7. *EI*, XXXI, pp. 249-62.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-128.
9. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 127-130.
10. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 79 ff.
11. *Ibid.*, XXXII, p. 91 ff.
12. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, pp. 123-134.
13. *Ibid.*, XXIII, p. 1 ff.
14. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, pp. 256.
15. *CII*, IV, p. 127 ff.
16. *EI*, XIV, pp. 121-130.
17. *IA*, XIX, p. 149 ff.
18. *EI*, XIII, p. 135 ff.
19. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 130 ff.
20. *CII*, IV, p. 90 ff.
21. *EI*, II, pp. 1-3.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 363-365.
23. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 115-16; 110-111.
24. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 358.
25. *Ibid.*, IV. pp. 106-107.
26. *Ibid.*, XIV, pp. 331-336.
27. *The Matsya Purāṇam*, pt II, ed. by S.V. Sastri, p. 32.
28. *EI*, XXXIV, p. 32 ff.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 37, foot note 7, Book No. 180 of 1932-33.
30. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, pp. 105-110.
31. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 355-359.
32. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 204 ff.
33. *Ibid.*, XXXI, pp. 74-80.
34. *Ibid.*, XXIX, pp. 89-97.
35. *Ibid.*, XXXV, pp. 193-7.
36. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 230-36.
37. *Ibid.*, V, p. 53 ff.
38. *CII*. IV, p. 491 ff.
39. *EI*, IV, pp. 97 ff ; *JUPHS*, Vol. XIV, p. 70 ff.
40. *EI*, V, pp. 106-12.
41. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, pp. 51 ff.
42. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 53-58.
43. *Ibid.*, XXVII, p. 197 ff.
44. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 122-123.
45. S. Jaiswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaishṇavism*, p. 148.
46. *CII*, III, p. 88-90.
47. *SI*, I, p. 437.
48. *EI*, XII, pp. 159-187.

49. *Ibid.*, IX, pp. 139-146.
50. *Ibid.*, XXXII, pp. 283-292.
51. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 126-128.
52. *IA*, XVIII, p. 130.
53. *EI*, XXXV, p. 209 ff.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 211 ff.
55. *JAHRS*, XIII, p. 51.
56. *IB*, III, p. 121 ff.
57. Kane, *HD*, II, p. 259.
58. *EI*, XXVI, pp, 65-68.
59. *CII*. III, p. 203.
60. *JBBRAS*, XIII, p. 1 ff.
61. *EI*, XXXI, pp. 109-28.
62. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, p. 263.
63. *Ibid.*, II, p. 305.
64. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 105-106.
65. *CII*, IV, p. 340 ff.
66. *EI*, XXXII, pp. 175 ff.
67. *Ibid.*, XXVI, pp. 62-65.
68. *Ibid.*, IV, p. 120.
69. *Ibid.*, XXX, p. 42.
70. *Ibid.*, XXXII, pp. 31-44.
71. *Ibid.*, IX, p. 24.
72. *IB*, III, p. 94 ff.
73. *EI*, XI, pp. 182-183.
74. *Ibid.*, XVIII, p. 323.
75. *JGJRS*, V, pp. 61-62.
76. *The Matsya Purāṇam* pt. II, p. 347.
77. *EI*, IX, p. 24.
78. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 124-128.
79. *Ibid.*, VII, p. 17.
80. *Ibid.*, XVII, p. 327 ; *The Classical Age*, p. 203.
81. *EI*, XVIII, p. 243.
82. *EI*, XXVIII, p. 257.
83. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII, p. 327.
84. *The Matsya Purāṇam* pt. II, pp. 355 ff.
85. *IB*, III, p. 71 ff.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 101 ff.
87. *JBBRAS*, XIII, p. 1 ff.
88. *EI*, XXVIII, p. 235 ff.
89. D. Chattopadhyaya, *Science and Society in Ancient India*, p. 4.

90. *EI*, IV, p. 97 ff.
91. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXV, p. 211 ff.
92. *CII*, III, p. 42-45.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 270-277.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
95. *EI*, XXI, pp. 260-67.
96. *CII*, IV, p. 512 ff.
97. *EI*, III, pp. 213 ff ; *Ibid*, XXIX, p. 13 ff.
98. *EI*, XXXII, p. 175 ff.
99. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 62 ff.
100. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 78-80.
101. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 239-268.
102. *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 141 ff.
103. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 48 ff.
104. *IA*, 1910, p. 204.
105. *EI*, XXXV, pp. 171-178.
106. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXII, p. 159 ff.
107. *SI*, I, p. 273.
108. *EI*, I, p. 73; *Ibid.*, VII, p. 158.
109. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, pp. 23-27.
110. *Ibid.*, XXXV, pp. 153-158.

5

GOTRAS AND THE BRAHMANAS

It is beyond the scope of present work to enter into controversies regarding the growth and development of gotras in the Vedic period. They might have been originally totemistic units;[1] they might have been derived from the planetory world[2] or might have been associated with Vedic ṛishis.[3] But what strikes us is that from the period of engraved written records gotra is holding a very important position in the brāhmaṇical society. It is not only the brāhmaṇas who had gotras, but members of some other castes also had gotras of their own. Inscriptions suggest that even the women used to introduce themselves with reference to their gotras. The foreigners like Śakas, who were accepted as khatriyas, also adopted Indian gotra names. An inscription from Dura (1st cent. A.D.) speaks of the lady Vardhanikā belonging to the Rishtishena (or Ārshṭishena) gotra.[4] The Andhau inscriptions of the time of Rudradāman record the names of Yaśodattā, of the Śenika (or Śrenika) gotra and Jyeshṭhavīrā of the Opaśati (or Aupaśatika) gotra.[5] The Western Kshatrapas belonged to the Bṛihatphala (or Bṛihatphalāyana) gotra.[6] The Guptas, who were probably not brāhmaṇas, adopted the Dhāraṇa gotra, as is known from the specification of the Vākāṭaka queen Prabhāvatīguptā, who was a princess of the Gupta lineage.[7]

In course of time members of other castes abstained from mentioning their gotras. It then became an important item in the specification and identification of a brāhmaṇa alone. The inscriptions, from the Gupta period onwards, show that henceforth the brāhmaṇas were mentioned, almost always, with reference to their gotras.[8] This gave rise to the custom of using the gotra as part of the name, a custom which was prevalent even upto the very recent time. Some of the brāhmaṇical cognomens found in Northern India, viz. Kāśyap, Bhārgav, Kauśik etc. are natural outcome of this common custom. In Bengal also this custom was popular. The Raipur copper-plate of Mahāsudevarāja is interesting in this respect. It speaks of two brothers Nāgavatsasvāmin and Bandhuvatsasvāmin, who belonged to the Vatsa gotra, which formed part of their names.[9]

Gotra was a very important factor in the life of a brāhmaṇa, because it is known from literature that the *mantras* to be uttered and rituals to be performed in various socio-religious functions varied from gotra to gotra. Jaimini went so far as to mention that even among the brāhmaṇas those belonging to the Bhṛigu, Vaśishṭha and Śunaka gotra could not take part in the *sattras*.[10]

Marriage within one's own gotra was strictly prohibited as such members were supposed to belong to the same family and to have the same type of blood.[11] The Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas, who came from Iran and adopted Indian gotra names, did not follow sagotra marriage restrictions because the basic principle behind such prohibition was not applicable to them.

There was a period when women could retain their paternal gotra even after marriage and their sons were called after the paternal gotra of the mother. This custom existed both among the kings, viz. Kāsīputra Bhāgabhadra, the Śuṅga king; Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi or Vasishthiputra Pulumavi, the Satavahana king etc., and also among the local chiefs and common people, e.g. Gotiputa (or Gautamiputra) Utara,[12] Gagiputa (or Gārgī-puta) Visadeva etc.[13] The reason behind the use of such metronymic gotras is not easy to find and scholars are of divided opinion on this point. But the point which should be stressed upon is that it was not mother's personal name, but her gotra which played its part in such metronymics.[14]

The earliest epigraphic reference to the use of the term gotra comes from a Mathura inscription of the time of Śoḍasa. It does not mention the brāhmaṇa treasurer of the king by name but says that he belonged to the Śaigrava gotra.[15] This gotra is not found in the *Gotra-pravara nibandha-kadamba* and seems to have become extinct. Though the term gotra did not appear, we have an idea of actual application of gotra from still earlier inscriptions. The Besnagar pillar inscription referring to Kāsīputra Bhāgabhadra is an epigraphic document mentioning the Kautsa gotra.[16] Gautamīputra, Gārgīputra are some of the metronymics which appear in the Mathura inscriptions of 1st century B.C. The Ghosundi pillar inscription speaks of Parāśarīputra Sarvatrāta, who was a Gajānana.[17] Scholars have taken Gajānana as the paternal gotra of Sarvatrāta. This gotra name is found in another inscription from Hathibada, referring to Sarvatrāta,[18] but is not referred to in the digests on the gotras. Epigraphs provide several instances of the use of both metronymics and patronymics in the specification of a person. Jaithri cave inscription (1st cent. A.D.) speaks of Maudgalīputra Muladeva, who belonged to the Vatsa gotra.[19] The Vākāṭaka king Vindhyaśakti II calls himself Hārītīputra and Vishṇuvṛiddhasagotra.[20] But from the Gupta period the use of metronymics gradually went out of vogue and persons came to be introduced by their paternal gotras only. A stock-taking of the gotras found in Pre-Gupta inscriptions-supply us with the following names-Arishṭasena, Aupāsanī, Kautsa, Kauśika, Gajāyana Garga, Gauṭama, Parāśara, Bharadvāja, Māṭhara, Śālamkāyana, Śaigrava Sainika, Vatsa, Vaśishṭha, Hārīta. It is difficult to say whether all these were brāhmaṇical gotras or not. Bṛihatphālyāyana gotra may be excluded as it is definitely known to have been the gotra of a Śaka king. Many of these gotras became very popular and continue uptil now. But some of them for various reasons unknown to us, went out of use.

From the Gupta period onwards there are numerous inscriptions giving names of various gotras. Sometimes minor variations occur in gotra names found from inscriptions. For example, the Agastya gotra is variously written as Agastya, Agasta and Agasti.[21] Kapi and Kāpya gotras were probably the same. Laukākshi, Laugākshi, Lakākshi,[22] Kātyāyana and Kātyāyanakila are examples of such variations. Bharadvāja and Bhāradvāja; Bhṛigu and Bhārgava;

Bṛihaspati and Bārhaspatya and similar other forms, in all probability, did not indicate separate gotras.

Most of the gotras which are prevalent among the modern brāhmaṇas are found in inscriptions. 21 gotra names are found among the "three main Brāhmaṇa castes, forming about 78 per cent of the total Brahmins of U.P."[23] They are—

1. Bharadvāja
2. Dhanañjaya
3. Gargya
4. Gautama
5. Kapisthala
6. Kāśyapa
7. Kātyāyana
8. Kauśika
9. Parāśara
10. Saṁkriti
11. Śāṇḍilya
12. Upamanyu
13. Vaśishṭha
14. Vatsa
15. Agastya
16. Bhṛigu
17. Gardhabhimukha
18. Ghṛitakauśika
19. Kauṇḍinya
20. Marga
21. Sāvarṇi

Of these only two, Gardhabhimukha and Marga, which are found among the Sarayūpāḍıs, are not found in inscriptions.

The brāhmaṇas of Bengal, according to Risley,[24] have 12 gotras, 3 among them—Jātukarṇa, Kānvāyana and Śaunaka are found in Bengal, but not among the Kanaujiyas. All of these three gotras are known from inscriptions though not from Bengal proper. Bengal brāhmaṇas of Kāṇvāyana gotra call themselves Dākshinātya Vaidikas and it is interesting to note that this gotra appears in the Penukonda copper-plate inscription of the Western Gaṅga king Mādhava (5th cent.), where the king is said to have belonged to this gotra.[25]

Eleven gotras are found among the brāhmaṇas of Mithilā,[26] of whom two are new—Baiyāghrapadya and Jāmadagni. The former name is not found in inscriptions.

Sherring has enumerated 16 gotras of the Sārasvats,[27] of whom Somastambha, Āṅgirasa, Kṛishṇātreya and Maunas are new. Somastambha is unknown in Indian epigraphy.

Ten gotras of the Gauḍa brāhmaṇas have been listed by Sherring.[28] All these gotras are found in inscriptions.

Maximum number of gotras are found among the Utkal Śreṇīya brāhmaṇas. Chandrasekhara Das informs us that 42 gotras are current among the brāhmaṇas of Orissa.[29] 19 of them are new additions. Seven of these gotras definitely appear in inscriptions. They are Ātreya, Bṛihaspati (in the form Bārhaspatya), Hārīta, Jāska, Kauṇḍinya, Maudgala and Visvāmitra. Udvalaka may be a modification of Uddālaka, a gotra which is found in an inscription from Orissa itself. If Lauhitabasa is a variant of the Lohita gotra and Nagasa that of Sanaga, these two names may be said to appear in inscriptions.

Maharashtra brāhmaṇas of five sub-castes, have among them 31 different gotras.[30] Of these 12 gotras are not found in the North. 5 of these 12 gotras are not referred to in inscriptions. The gotras mentioned in inscriptions are—Bābhru (not Bābhravya), Bādarāyana, Kapi, Lohita (Lohitāksha), Naidhruva (in the compound form Naidhruva-Kāśyapa), Nitundi (not Nityundana) and Vishṇurvṛiddha.

Sherring has listed 13 gotras which he could trace among the brāhmaṇas of Malwa.[31] Of them 2 are new, e.g. Maitreya (Mitrayu) and Tailakaksha. It is interesting that both Maitreya and Mitrayu forms are found in inscriptions. The other name is absent.

Of the brāhmaṇas of Gujarat Sherring has mentioned only the gotras of the Audichyas, who have 7 gotras.[32] Dalbhya which is a new addition here is referred to in inscriptions. Thus of the various gotras of the maximum number of brāhmaṇas living in the

Indo-Aryan speaking regions we have been able to trace at least 42 gotras from inscriptions.

Some of these gotras found in inscriptions were very common. They are Bharadvāja, Bhārgava, Kāśyapa, Vatsa, Kauṇḍiya, Ātreya, Kauśika, Vaśishha, Gautama, Hārīta, Śāṇḍilya, Parāśara. Some others, though not so common, were quite popular. In this group comes Agastya, Kāṇva, Saṁkṛita, Mudgala, Śunaka etc. Some other gotra names are of rare occurrances.

Persons of the same gotra need not necessarily belong to the same Veda. For example, the Bharadvāja gotra may be found among the brāhmaṇas of different Vedas. The Prince of Wales Museum plates of Dadda III (A.D. 675-6) refers to a brāhmaṇa donee of the Bharadvāja gotra who was a student of the Ṛigveda.[33] Droṇalena referred to in the Isapur Yūpa inscription was of Bharadvāja gotra and belonged to the Chhandoga charaṇa.[34] The Midnapur copper-plate of Śasāṅka speaks of Dāmyasvāmi of Bharadvāja gotra who was a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā of the Yajurveda.[35] The Bhauma-kara king Śubhākara II granted lands in favour of six brāhmaṇa donees, who all belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra and were students of the Kāṇva śākhā of the Vājasaneya charaṇa.[36] Bharadvājī brāhmaṇas of Krishṇa Yajurveda are known from the Dalavay-agraharam plates of Venkaṭapatideva (16th century).[37] The Balwa copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III refers to the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇa Jayantaśarman, who also belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra.[38] The gotras such as Āśvalāyana, Aupamanyava Chhandogi, Gobhila, Baudhāyana, Kaṇva and Śaunaka induce us to connect the brāhmaṇas of these gotras with some particulars vedas and their śākhās. Brāhmaṇa Anantadatta of the Chhandagi gotra was in fact a student of the Chhandogi Śākhā.[39] Brāhmaṇa of the Gobhila gotra was also a student of the Chhandoga charaṇa.[40] Yet it would be too hasty a conclusion. Kāṇva gotra is found among the Ṛigvedīs and the Yajurvedīs of the Mādhyandina school also.[41] Śunaka gotra is noticed among the brāhmaṇas of all the three Vedas,[42] except those of the Atharvaveda, with which his name is intimately associated. Brāhmaṇa Haridatta of the Aupamanyava gotra belonged to the Bahvṛicha Śākhā[43] and was not a student of the Kṛishṇa Yajurvada.

Some of the gotras are connected with the names of persons, renowned for their knowledge in different branches of learning. Pāṇini was a grammarian; Kauṭilya was an authority on Arthasastra; Droṇa was associated with Dhanurveda and Kapila was the expounder of Śāṁkhya system of Philosophy. But it is interesting that none of these four gotras—Pāṅini, Kauṭilya, Droṇāyana of Kapila were popular.[44]

Sometimes gotra names are found in compound forms joining two well known gotras, e.g. Kamakāyana-Viśvāmitra, Kauśika-Viśvāmitra, Vatsa-Bhārgava, Mauna-Bhārgava, Jāmadagnya-Vatsa, Hārīta-Kutsa, and Naidhruva-Kāśyapa.[45] We have an interesting gotra in an inscription from Ahmednagar. It reads Viśvāmitra-Aghamarshana-Kauśika gotra,[46] thus compounding three names in one. It is noteworthy that most of the compound gotras are found in late inscriptions ranging between 12th to 16th centuries. The history behind the formation of such compound-gotras can only be guessed. Śuṇga-Bhāradvāja is an interesting compound gotra.[47] Hārīta gotra had more than one compound forms, of which Kumāra-Hārīta is one.[48] An inscription from Vijayanagara speaks of a brāhmaṇa of Svatantra-Kapi gotra.[49] Some of the compound gotra names are difficult to be explained. Bhemāṇkāśyapa is such a name which appears in a Śālaṁkāyana inscription of 4th century A.D.[50] It would not be irrelevant to mention here that Kāśyapa was a flexible gotra, which incorporated different elements. There is a proverb which says that he who has no gotra can call himself a Kāśyapa. It is possible that the first part of the compound name speaks of the clanish affinity of a group of people who were absorbed within the fold of brāhmaṇism and were given the Kāśyapa gotra. Yajnāḍha-Parāśara is another peculiar compound gotra which appears in an inscription from Orissa and belongs to the 9th century A.D.[51]

Many of the gotras are non-Sanskritic in nature and may be regarded as *tatbhaba* forms from local dialects. These types of gotras are very important because they may show how local and tribal priests practising magicoreligious rites were raised to Brāhmaṇahood and new gotras were formed. Kaimbala, Kālāsa, Ābharadvasu, Adavaha etc. are examples of such gotras.[52] In the reverse way some well-known Sanskritic gotras may be changed into their *tatsama* forms. In the Pattattalamangalam grant of the Pallava king Nandivarman reference has been made to a brāhmaṇa of Āttiraiya gotra which in all probability is a *tatsama* form of the Ātreya gotra.[53]

Local characteristics may be noticed in some gotra names. For example, in the South Indian incriptions we are introduced to the Śrivatsā gotra.[54] If Vatsa and Śrīvatsa were same we do not know why the honorofic title was added to Vatsa and not to some other gotras like Atri or Kauṇḍinya. Like Vatsa and Śrīvatsa mention may be made of Śālāvata and Śrīśālāvata gotras,[55] both the forms appearing in South Indian inscriptions.

There are epigraphic evidence of localization of gotras. For example, the Anbil plates of Sundara Chola refers to his brāhmaṇa minister Aniruddha who belonged to the Āveṇi gotra.[56] This gotra name is not found in any North Indian inscription, but is referred to in a few inscriptions from South India, where this gotra is actually found among the brāhmaṇas. When brāhmaṇas of a particular gotra used to live in a particular locality, the gotra became associated with that region. A 13th century inscription from Gujarat, for example, speaks of the brahmana Prahladana as *Nandipuragotraja* and does not mention the actual gotra.[57] The gotra of the Nandipurīya brāhmaṇas was apparently well-known at one time, but unfortunately now we are not in a position to determine the gotra of Prahladana. Goharwa plates of the Kalachuri king Karṇadeva mention of brāhmaṇa of Vidarbhi-Kauṇdinḍinya gotra.[58] If we take the first part of the gotra name as a regional appalation it may mean that some brāhmaṇas of Kauṇḍinya gotra who settled down in Vidarbha became famous as Vidarbhi-Kauṇdinya; or that there were two Kauṇdinyas, one of who was distinguished as Vidarbhi-Kauṇdinya by his associated with the said country. It is interesting to note that the Kaundinya gotra has three pravaras—Kauṇḍinya, Vaśishṭha and Maitrāvaruṇa. But the brāhmaṇa donee of the Vidarbhi-Kauṇdinya gotra had Āṅgirasa-

Ambarisa and Yauvanāsva pravara. A brāhmaṇa called Vidarbhi-Kauṇḍinya is mentioned in the *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* (II. 6.3 & IV. 6.3).

In this connection it would be of interest to note that several villages referred to in inscriptions as being donated to a brāhmaṇa or group of brāhmaṇas belonging to a particular gotra are still found to be inhabited by brāhmaṇas of that gotra. Chaurashi grant of Śivakaradeva records the donation of the village Vuvrada in the Antarudra vishaya of South Tosali to Jallubhaṭṭa of Kātyāyana gotra. This village has been identified with modern Vanvarada, about three miles from Chaurasi. Narayana Tripathi, the editor of the charter, has informed us that the brāhmaṇas of this village still belong to the Kātyāyana gotra, to which the donee of the charter belonged about a thousand years ago.[59]

A Gahaḍavāla grant records the gift of the village Maner to some brāhmaṇas of Kāśyapa gotra and three pravaras. R.S. Sharma noticed that brāhmaṇas of this gotra still live in Maner. "Others called Maneria Brāhmaṇa with the same gotra and pravaras are found in the district of Arrah. According to their traditions the originally lived in Maner from where they were driven out by the Muslims in the beginning of the 13th century."[60] Some traditional brāhmaṇa families may be traced and studied in this way.

Sometimes particular gotras are associated with specified groups of people. In the Torkheda copper-plate grants of the time of Govindarāja of Gujarat mention has been made of several brāhmaṇa donees with their gotra affiliations.[61] In case of a few donees it is said that their gotra is the same with that of the Āgneyas. At the present state of our knowledge it cannot be said definitely who were the Āgneyas and what was their gotra. From some other parts of India we hear of brāhmaṇas of Agniveśya (or Āgniveśya) gotra,[62] but there is no evidence to connect the Āgneyas with Agniveśya gotra. In this context it may be noted that some of the Vaidyas of Bengal, who claim to be brāhmaṇas, have the Vaiśvānara gotra, which as a synonym of Agni. This gotra has not been traced in inscriptions but the name of Vaiśvānara appears in the list of pravaras in some inscriptions. This gotra name is present in the mediaeval list.

A critical analysis of gotras found in inscriptions of different localities may throw some light on the mobility of the brāhmaṇas. The Bārhaspatya gotra is found only in two records—one coming from Gujarat and another from Assam.[63] This gotra is not found in digests. But Bṛihaspati gotra is noticed among the present Oriya brāhmaṇas. There is another gotra which is also found in the widely separated regions of Gujarat and Assam. It is the Paurṇa gotra.[64] Interestingly enough in both the cases the brāhmaṇa donees are said to have been the students of the Ṛigveda. Prāchetasa gotra also appear in records of Gujarat and Assam only.[65] This gotra is not listed in the digests.

Similarly, South Indian elements can be traced among the brāhmaṇas of Assam. The Śālaṁkāyana gotra which is found in the South appears in Assamese inscription.[66] The Agnivesya gotra which is noticed in the records of Andhra and Tamilnadu is found in one inscription of Assam and in one from Bengal.[67] Sankalia on the basis of similar on the gotras and śākhās of brāhmaṇas, referred to in inscriptions, has shown how a small South Indian element was introduced in Gujarat during the reigns of the Rāshṭrakūtas and the Chālukyas.[68]

There are many gotras which are listed in mediaeval digests on gotras and pravaras but are neither met with in ancient inscriptions nor among the present brāhmaṇical clan units. Again, there are several gotras which are traceable among the modern brāhmaṇical groups and are also enumerated in digests, but are not found in epigraphic records. The non-mention of some existing gotra names in inscriptions does not prove anything, because inscriptions do not claim to give all the past gotra-names. But so far as the first proposition is concerned Ghure has made an important remark. He has shown that about 50 to 70 gotras are current among the 75 percent of the brāhmaṇas of the Indo-Aryan speaking regions, "which must be presumed to have received the largest influx from the original stock of Midlandic Brahmins of Vedic culture." Such a small number of existing gotras raise doubt about the long list of gotras found in the digests. Ghure therefore concludes that "the list of gotras, presented by traditionalists from Baudhāyana down to Purushottama and even later authors, represent a superstructure of large fiction built over fairly small foundation of facts. The list evidently were made to accomodate all known units, local as well as lineage-based, well fitted into the pravara scheme for respectability and security."[69] The study of the inscriptions also lead us to similar conclusions. Assuming that the gotras prevalent among the brāhmaṇas all over India were double the number known from inscriptions, we get only about 300 gotras, far less of the number given even by Baudhāyana in his *Pravarādhyāya*.

It is interesting that even in such exhaustive lists like the *Gotra-pravara-mañjari* or *Gotra-pravara-nibandha-kadamba* we often do not get mention of gotras referred to in inscriptions. Kaimbala, Kālāsa, Valandata, are a few of the gotras which may come within this category.[70] While editing the Navasari plates of Jayabhaṭa III Bhagavan lal Indraji read the gotra of the brāhmaṇa donee as Shrāvāyana, which he later proposed to alter for Brādhnāyana.[71] Mirashi while re-editing the charter did not change the reading but supposed that the gotra would be Prāgāyaṇa, as it is the nearest substitute that can be adopted on the basis of the digest.[72] But the approach is wrong. The non-mention of a gotra in the text does not prove that such gotras did not exist. They only show that either the name has been omitted, or the gotra became extinct when the digest was compiled. Inscriptions which are direct evidence of social condition prevalent in the past, are to be relied more and in the light of the evidence derived from inscriptions the mediaeval digests may be supplemented, modified and corrected.

There might have been various reasons behind the extinction of some gotra names and one of them may be related with the extinction of some Vedic śākhās. Chaüliya, Kaimbala, Kālāsa, Srāvishṭha, Valandata are some of the gotras which are not mentioned in the *Gotra pravaranibandha-Kadamba* and are found in inscriptions only in association of the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas.[73] These gotras seem to have become extinct with the loss of popularity of their patrons.

Macdonell and Keith suggested that "Change of Gotra was quite possible" and illustrated the point with the case of Śunaḥśepa and Gṛitsamada, who, once an Āṇgirasa, became a Bhārgava.[74] No definite evidence of change of gotra, however, is known from the inscriptions. But in this context reference may be made to a statement of D. C. Sircar. The Penukonda copper-plate inscription of the Western Gaṅga king Mādhava mentions that the family belonged to the Kāṇvāyana gotra.[75] In the case of the Eastern Gaṅgas, who are supposed to be related to the Western Gaṅgas "the Kāṇvāyana gotra is changed to Ātreya."[76] This is one of the points of doubt for any actual relationship between the two family. But if on the basis of Macdonell and Keith it is agreed that the gotra could be changed, here we have in the case of the Western and Eastern Gaṅgas an actual epigraphic evidence of the change of gotra in historic period. And it is not impossible that in this process of transformation some of the gotra names have become extinct.

It may, however, be pointed out in the conclusion that detail anthropological survey on the gotras of the brāhmaṇas may bring to light many other brāhmaṇical families, with such gotra names, which are supposed to have become extinct or which are unknown in epigraphical records.

Reference

1. *JBBRAS*, XXIV, pp. 21-80.
2. Ghure, *Two Brahmanical Institutions-Gotra and Charana*, pp. 84-125.
3. This is the generally accepted view.
4. *EI*, XXXV. p. 190.
5. *SI*, I, p. 174.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 524.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 436.
8. I have discussed in this chapter only the gotras of the brāhamaṇas and not their pravaras because the inscriptions suggest that the pravaras were not regular items in the specification of the brāhmaṇas. It is often found that as

in modern days, the brāhmaṇas were not well acquainted with their pravaras and supplied wrong information about their pravaras. For example, one Lahada-sarman referred to in the Ren copper-plate grant of Govindachandra gives "the astonishing pravara 'Garga', Angirasa, Visvāmitra, Jamadagni and Varhaspati" (*IA*, XIX, p. 252). Brough is of the opinion that such references may help us in detecting false brāhmaṇas. But in all probability they betray their ignorance and nothing more. Cf. Brough, *The Early Brahmanical system of Gotra and Pravara*, p. 21, foot note 1.

9. *CII*, III, p. 196.
10. *Jaiminiya*, VI, 6. 24-26.
11. Brāhmaṇas of the Bhṛigu gotra can marry within the same gotra provided the maximum number of pravaras are different.
12. *MI*, p. 198.
13. *SI*, I, p. 87.
14. *PIHC*, 1974 p. 63 ff.
15. *SI*, I, p. 121.
16. *Ibid*., p. 89.
17. *Ibid*., pp. 90-91.
18. *Ibid*., p. 91 foot note 1.
19. *EI*, XXII, p. 36.
20. *SI*, I, p. 431.
21. *EI*, III, p. 344; *ibid*., XVI, p. 290; *ibid*; XXI, p. 96; *ibid*., XXIX, p. 177. "Agasti as a variant form of Agastya's name occurs once in the Atharvaveda" —Cf. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, I, p. 6.
22. Brough has noted that "there are a few interesting divergencies in the sutra-lists from the forms of names known in the earlier Vedic literature." Lokāksha and Laukākshi are, for example, older forms from which Laugākshi is derived. Inscriptions show that different forms of the same name existed side by side. Cf. Brough, *op. cit*., p. XIII.
23. Ghure, *op*, *cit*, p. 221.
24. Risley, *Census of India*, 1901, *Ethnographic Appendices*, pp. 194-97. These gotras are—
    (1) Bharadvāja, (2) Gautama, (3) Kāśyapa, (4) Kauśika (5) Śāṇḍilya, (6) Vaśishṭha, (7) Vatsa, (8) Sāvarṇi, (9) Ghṛitakauśika, (10) Jātukarṇa, (11) Kāṇvāyana, (12) Śauṇaka.
25. *SI*, I, p. 480.
26. Sherring has given the following list of gotras found among the Maithila brāhmaṇas :—
    (1) Bharadvāja, (2) Gargya (3) Gautama, (4) Kāśyapa, (5) Kātyayāna, (6) Parāśara, (7) Śāṇḍilya, (8) Vatsa, (9) Sāvarṇī, (10) Baiyāghrapadya, (11) Jāmadagni. Cf. *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, I, p. 72.

27. These gotras are — (Sherring, *op. cit*., p. 65),
(1) Bharadvāja, (2) Gargya, (3) Gautama, (4) Kāśyapa (5) Parāśara, (6) Śāṇḍilya, (7) Vatsa, (8) Sāvarṇi, (9) Bhārgava, (10) Vaśishṭha, (11) Kauśika, (12) Upamanyu, (13) Somas.

28. These gotras are—(*Ibid*., p. 69)
(1) Bharadvāja, (2) Gautama, (3) Kāśyapa, (4) Kauśika, (5) Kṛishnātreya, (6) Parāśara, (7) Vatsa, (8) Śāṇḍilya, (9) Vasishṭha, (10) Āṅgirasa.

29. This list has been taken from Ghure's book on Gotras, *appendix*, pp. 311-312.
(1) Agasthya (2) Angiras (3) Ātreya (4) Aupabana (5) Basuki (6) Vatsasa (7) Bayagrapadhya (8) Bharadvāja (9) Bhārgava (10) Viśvāmitra (11) Bṛihaspati (12) Battātreya (13) Dhanañjaya (14) Gautama, (15) Ghṛitakauśika, (16) Hārīta, (17) Indrakauśika, (18) Jaiminī, (19) Jāmadagni, (20) Jāska, (21) Kāṇva, (22) Kapiñjala, (23) Kāśyapa, (24) Kātyāyana, (25) Kaundinya, (26) Kauśika, (27) Krishṇātreya, (28) Lauhitavasa, (29) Madhuchandasa, (30) Maudgalya, (31) Nagasa, (32) Nārāyaṇa, (33) Parāśara, (34) Śāṇḍilya, (35) Sankuti (Saṁkṛiti), (36) Sāvarṇya, (37) Sitañjala, (38) Udbalaka (39) Yājñavalkya. Gautama gotra has been given twice as they have two different pravara-lists. Kauśika and Kuśika have been separately mentioned as the pravaras are also different. Similarly Mudgala and Maudgalya have been separated on the basis of difference in pravaras.

30. These gotras as listed by N. G. Chapekar, are :
(1) Āṅgirasa, (2) Atri, (3) Bābhravya, (4) Bādarāyana, (5) Bharadvāja, (6) Bhārgava, (7) Dhanañjaya, (8) Gargya, (9) Gautama, (10) Jāmadagnya, (11) Kapi, (12) Kāśyapa, (13) Kauṇḍinya, (14) Kauśika, (15) Kutsa, (16) Lohitāksha, (17) Mudgala, (18) Naidhruva, (19) Nityundana, (20) Parāśara, (21) Pārthiva, (22) Salaksha. (23) Śāṇḍilya, (24) Śāṅkhāyayana, (25) Śauṇaka, (26) Upamanyu, (27) Vainya, (28) Vatsa, (29) Vishṇuvṛiddha, (30) Vaśishtha, (31) Viśvāmitra. Cf. Chapekar, *Chitpavan*, p. 37.

31. These gotras are—
(1) Bharadvāja, (2) Parāśara, (3) Āṅgirasa, (4) Gautama, (5) Śāṇḍilya, (6) Tilkāksha, (7) Vatsa, (8) Kautsa, (9) Kāśyapa, (10) Kātyāyana, (11) Kauṇḍinya, (12) Maitreya, (13) Vaśishtha. Sherring has referred to another as Ardha-Vaśishṭha. Cf. Sherring, *op. cit*. I, p. 105.

32. Sherring has enumerated the following gotras—(*Ibid*., I, p. 100).
(1) Bharadvāja, (2) Bhārgava, (3) Dalbhya, (4) Gautama, (5) Kāśyapa, (6) Mudgala, (7) Vatsa.

33. *EI*, XXVII, p. 197.

34. *SI*, I, pp. 149-50.

35. *JASB*, L, XI, p. 9.

36. *EI*, XXVIII, p. 216.

37. *Ibid*., XII, p. 163 ff.

38. *Ibid*., XXIX, p. 12.
39. *Ibid*., X, p. 74.
40. *Ibid*., IV, p. 112.
41. *Ibid*., XII, p. 205 ff; *CII*, III, p. 117 ff.
42. *KS*, p. 25; *EI*, XVII, p. 108.
43. *EI*, XII, p. 5.
44. *Ibid*., IV, p. 153; *KS*, p. 20; *IA*, V, p. 205; *EI*, XIV, p. 321.
45. *EI*, XII, pp 181, 355; *ibid*., IV, p. 130; *EI*, XII, p. 179; *ibid*., XXXII, p. 42; *Ibid*., XII, p. 354. Jāmadagnya-Vatsas are referred to by Āpastamba, who says that they have the five-fold cutting of the Sacrificial cake.
46. *EI*, XXXII, p. 43.
47. *Ibid*., V, p. 61.
48. *Ibid*., XII, p. 241.
49. *Ibid*., p. 183.
50. *Ibid*.
51. *JBORS*, II, p. 415.
52. *EI*, XIV, p. 166; *ibid*., XIV, p. 166; *ibid*., XXXIII, p. 231; *ibid*., XXIV, p. 233.
53. *Ibid*., XVIII, p. 124.
54. *Ibid*., III, pp. 246-249.
55. *Ibid*., III, p. 248; *ibid*., II, pp. 23-35.
56. *Ibid*., XV, p. 63.
57. *Ibid*., I, p. 31.
58. *Ibid*., XI, p. 145.
59. *JBORS*, XIV, pp. 292-306.
60. *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, I, pt. II, p. 360.
61. *EI*, III, pp. 55-56.
62. *Ibid*., VII, p. 273; *ibid*., VI, p. 87; *KS*, p. 21.
63. *KS*, p. 24.
64. *CII*, IV, pt. 1, p. 35; *KS*, p. 22.
65. *KS*, p. 17.
66. *EI*, XXVII, p. 317; *KS*, p. 23.
67. *EI*, VI, p. 87; *KS*, p. 21.
68. Sankalia, *Stud. His. Cul. Geog. Eth. Guj*., p. 122ff.
69. Ghure, *op. cit*., pp. 226-228.
70. *EI*, XIV, p. 166; *loc. cit*., *ibid*., p. 167.
71. *IA*, XIII, p. 78 and foot note 28.
72. *CII*, IV, p. 86 and foot note 3.
73. *EI*, XIV, p. 167; *ibid*., p. 160; *ibid*., p. 167; *ibid*., XXVI, p. 152.
74. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, p. 236.
75. *SI*, I, p. 480.
76. *Loc. cit*., foot note 1.

APPENDIX

A list of gotras from inscriptions.

Ābharadvasu gotra
Adavāha gotra
Agasti/Agastya gotra
Agniveśya/Āgniveśya gotra
Ālambāyana/Ālavāyana gotra
Ananta-Vaishṇava gotra
Aṇgirasa/Āṇgirasa gotra
Ārshṭishena gotra
Aślāyana/Āśvalāyana gotra
Asurāyana (?) gotra
Atri/Ātreya/Atti
[Chandrātreya gotra]
[Kṛishṇātreya gotra]
[Gaurātreya gotra]
Audalya gotra
Audarasmi gotra
Aupamanyava/Upamanyu gotra
Aupaśati/Aupasvasti gotra
Autathya gotra

Āveni gotra

Avishṭa gotra

Babhru/Babhura/Vābhravya gotra

Bādarāyaṇa gotra

Bārhaspatya gotra

Baudhāyana gotra

Bhādrāyana gotra

Bhālandana/Bhālandāyana gotra

Bharadvāja/Bhāradvāja gotra

[Śuṅga-Bhāradvāja gotra]

Bhemāṇ-Kāśyapa gotra

Bhṛigu/Bhārgava gotra

[Mauna-Bhārgava gotra]

Brādhṇāyana gotra

Bṛihatphalāyana gotra

Chandrātreya gotra

Chauli gotra

Chhandogi gotra

Daksha gotra

Dalbhya gotra

Dāṇḍāyana gotra

Darbhi gotra

Dārdhyachyuta gotra

Dauṇḍakiya gotra

Devarāta gotra

Dhanañjaya gotra

Dhāraṇa gotra

Dhaumra gotra/Dhaumrāyana gotra

Dhaumya gotra

Droṇāyana gotra

Gajāyana (gotra)

Gālava gotra

Garga/Gārgya/Gārgyāyana gotra

Gauṇya gotra

Gaurātreya gotra

Gautama gotra

Gavishmi gotra

Ghṛita-Kauśika gotra

Gobhila gotra

Hārīta gotra/Hārita gotra

Hārīta-Kutsa gotra

[Kumāra-Hārīta gotra]

Harkkari gotra

Hastidāsa gotra

Jāmadagni gotra

Jāmadagny-Vatsa gotra

*Jāska gotra/Yāska gotra

Jātukarṇa gotra

Jāvāla gotra
Jīvantyāyana gotra
Kaimbala gotra
Kālāsa gotra
Kāmakāyana gotra
Kāmakāyana-Viśvāmitra gotra
Kaṇva/Kāṇvāyana gotra
Kapi/Kāpya gotra
[Svatantra-Kapi gotra]
Kapila gotra/Kāpila gotra
Kapiñjala gotra
Kapishṭhala gotra
Kāśyapa gotra
[Bhemāṇ-Kāśyapa gotra
Naidhruva-Kāśyapa gotra]
Kāśyapapada gotra
Kātyāyana/Kātyāyanakila gotra
Kauṇḍinya gotra
[Vidarbhi-Kauṇḍinyagotra]
Kauśika-gotra
[Ghṛita-Kauśika-gotra
Varddha-Kauśika gotra]
Kauśika-Viśvāmitra gotra
Kausrāvasa gotra

Kauṭilya gotra
Kautsa/Kutsa gotra
Kavaṇdilla gotra
Kavestara gotra
Kṛishṇātreya gotra
Kṛishnāyana gotra
Kuhala gotra
Kumāra-Hārīta gotra
Lakshmaṇa gotra
Lāmakāyana gotra
Laugākshi/Laukākshi/Lokāksha gotra
Lauhāyana/Lohāyana gotra
Lavana/Lāvāyana/Lavandhāyana gotra
Lohita/Lohitya/Lauhitya gotra
Māḍala gotra
Maḍhara gotra
Māhula gotra
Maitreya gotra
Mānasa gotra
Mānavya gotra
Māṇḍavya gotra
Māṇḍira gotra
Māṅgalya gotra
Mā (or Va) ruḷa gotra

Mārkanḍeya gotra
Maurya gotra
Mauna gotra
Mauna-Bhārgava gotra
Mitrayuva gotra
Mudgala/Maudgala gotra
Nitundi gotra
Pāṁkalya gotra
Pāṇini gotra
Parāśara gotra
[Yajnāḍha Parāśara gotra]
Parāvasu gotra
Parghasa gotra
Pauṇḍri gotra
Paurṇa gotra
Pavitra gotra
Pippalāda gotra
Prāchetasa gotra
Pratihārānyaya (gotra ?)
Pūtimāsha/Pautimāsya gotra
Rathitara gotra
Rohita/Rauhitya gotra
Saigravasa gotra
Saiteha (?) gotra

Śālaṅkāyana gotra
Sālāvata/Śrīśālāvata gotra
Saṁkṛita/Saṁkṛiti/Sāṁkṛitya/Sāṁkṛityāyana gotra
Sanaga gotra
Śāṇḍilya/Śāṇḍilyāyana gotra
Śaṅkha gotra
Sārkara/Sārkarava/Sārkavasya gotra
Sarkarāksha/Sārkarakshi gotra
Sathamarshana gotra
Sātyāyana gotra
Saundāna gotra
Śaunika gotra
Sauśrāvasa gotra
Sāvarṇa/Sāvarṇi gotra
Sravayana gotra
Śrāvishṭha/Śrāvishṭhāyana gotra
Śrenika gotra
Śunakaka/Śaunaka gotra
Śuṇga-Bhāradvāja gotra
Svatantra-Kapi gotra
Tānavya gotra
Traikāyana gotra
Udavāhi gotra
Uddālaka gotra

Ulukha gotra
*[Upamanyu/Aupamanyava gotra
Upanasya gotra
Vabhryaśva gotra
Vabhravya/Babhura gotra
Vaddamukha gotra
Vādhūla gotra
Vālakhilya gotra
Valandata gotra
Vandhula/Bandhula gotra
Varāha/Vārāhi gotra
Vārdhinasa gotra
Vārddhyaśva gotra
Vārshṇeya gotra
Varshagana gotra
Vaśishṭha gotra
Vaśishṭhapada gotra
Vāsula/Vāsala gotra
Vatsa/Śrīvatsa gotra
Vatsa-Bhārgava gotra
[Jāmadagnya-Vatsa gotra]
Vidarbhi-Kauṇḍinya gotra
Viśvāmitra-gotra
Viśvamitra-Āghamarshaṇa-Khuśika gotra

Vishṇuvriddha gotra
Vrajagana gotra
Yajnāḍa-Parāśara gotra
Yāska/Jāska gotra
Yaugana gotra

6

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE BRAHMANAS

The brāhmaṇas of India are divided into two broad regional groupings, the Vindhya being the demarcating line. The North Indian brāhmaṇas, known as the Pañcha-Gauḍas, are classified into Sārasvata, Gauḍa, Kāṇyakubja, Maithila and Utkala. The Pañcha-Drāviḍas are the Gurjjaras, Mahārāśṭriyas, Karṇāṭakas, Trailaṅgas and Drāviḍas. These groupings, though arbitrary, are of general acceptance. They are referred to in the Skanda purāṇa. The Chinchani grant of the time of the Rāshṭrakūta king Indra III suggests that by about 10th century A.D. it was a well recognized classification. It records the grant of a village for the creation of an endowment, from the income of which money would be spent for the repairs of the *maṭha* constructed by the brāhmaṇa Annaiya and also for the offering of *Naivedya* to the goddess Daśamī and for the feeding of nine persons belonging to the *Pañcha-Gauḍīya Mahāparishad* of Samyana, i.e., the community of North Indian brāhmaṇas settled there.[1]

Grouping of people on regional basis, however, is as old as the days of Pāṇini. He laid down rules for framing names of *varṇas* or *jātis* after the *janapadas* where they lived.[2] Kāsikā while commenting upon the sūtra cited the example of Avanti brāhmaṇa and Saurāshtra brāhmaṇa.[3] The names like Avantī of Saurāshtra brāhmaṇa not only denoted the region where they lived but also connoted some characteristics of the brāhmaṇas residing in respective regions. So it became customary for a brāhmaṇa to introduce himself with reference to his native land. A false statement regarding the land wherefrom a brāhmaṇa came was considered as a crime.[4] Thus the locale was as important an item in the identification and specification of a brāhmaṇa as his gotra and Veda were. In the inscriptions therefore, often detail informations are found about the regional affiliation of the brāhmaṇa donees. Sometimes they mentioned the original homeland of the donees, wherefrom they had migrated (i.e. *Vinirgata*), recorded the places where they had settled down (*vāstavya*) and specified the donated lands with which they could further be associated. The Taltali copper-plate of Dharmamahādevī speaks of the donee Padmanābha of Śāṇdilya gotra, and Devala pravara, who had migrated from Kolāñcha, but was a resident of Koṁsala in the Hindol slate. He received the village Taratаloi which was situated in the vishaya of Talamuṛa, identified with Talmul, 7 miles away from Angul in Orissa.[5]

An analysis of the names of these places shows that the brāhmaṇas sometimes associated their names with villages, sometimes with towns, and sometimes with still broader regional affiliations. The Katak copper-plate of Mahābhavagupta, for example, speaks of a donee who emigrated from Ṭakāri,[6] which is known to have been a bhaṭṭa-grāma situated within the Śrāvastī-bhukti of Madhyadeśa. The Sankheda copper-plates of Dadda II mentioned the brāhmaṇa donee Sūrya, who emigrated from Daśapura, an important town of the kingdom of Avantī.[7] Virasenasāba, a brāhmaṇa of Kautsa gotra, who was a minister of Chandragupta II, introduced himself in the Udaygiri cave inscription as belonging to Pātaliputra.[8] Many of the donees receiving grants from the Paramāra kings are said to have come from Madhyadeśa, while others are mentioned with specific references to ther native towns or villages.[9] Some of the villages and and towns became so famous as centres of Brāhmaṇism that the high descent of a brāhmaṇa could be understood from the mention of simple village or town names. A study of the names of these places would throw light on the clusters of cultural growth. Reference may be made here to a few such centres to show how regional nomenclatures carried with them some cultural connotations.

There are several inscriptions referring to Ṭakāri, spelt variously as Ṭakāri, Tarkāri, Ṭakkāri, Dhekāri etc. Scholars are of divided opinion about the indentification of these places and it is definite that they all do not refer to the same place. But some interesting deductions can be made by a careful study of the inscriptions referring to such names. The Katak copper-plate grant of Mahābhavagupta speaks of the donee bhaṭṭa Śrī Mahattama Sādhārana, son of bhaṭṭa Śrī Śobhana, who emigrated from Ṭakāri. The donee belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra with the pravaras of Bārhaspatya and Āṅgirasa and was a student of the Vājasaneya śākhā.[10] Katak copper-plate of Mahāśivagupta records the grant of land in favour of Śaṅkarapāṇi, son of Dinakara and grandson of Ānanda, who belonged to Ṭakkāri-Bharadvāja gotra with the three pravaras and was a student of the Kauthuma śākhā.[11] Santigrama grant of Daṇḍīmahādevī (8th cent.) says that the queen granted some lands to bhaṭṭa Makhyadeva, son of Jalladeva and grandson of Purushottama, of Bharadvāja gotra and a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā of the Vājasaneya charaṇa. The donee's family originally hailed from Ṭakāri.[12] The Silimpur stone inscription of the time of Jayapāla which contains a *prasasti* of a brāhmaṇa family, says that they had emigrated from Ṭakāri.[13] They belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra and Āṅgirasa pravara. Dhaṅga, the Chāndella king donated a village to bhaṭṭa Yaśodhara, son of bhaṭṭa Jayakumāra of the Bharadvāja gotra and three pravaras, who belonged to the Vājasaneya śākhā. Their original homeland was Tarkārika.[14] Devendravarman, another king of the same dynasty granted lands to Abhimanyu, son of bhaṭṭa Ella and grandson of Jasavara of Bharadvāja gotra whose three pravaras were Āṅgirasa, Bārhaspātya and Bhāradvāja. The donee was a Yajurvedī and hailed from the bhaṭṭa grāma Dhakāri.[15] The Chāndella king Madanavarman gave a piece of land to the brāhmaṇa Rasa (or bha) laśarmā, son of Jāṭa, grandson of Śānti and great grandson of Vāmana of the Bharadvāja gotra and three pravaras. The donee came from Dhakāri.[16] Kalas-Budrakh plates of Bhillama III, the Rāshtrakūta king records the gift of lands to Mahāpradhāna Manamavanāyaka, the son of Śrīvatsanāyaka, grandson of Padmanabha and great-grandson of Śrībhaṭṭa, who originally came from Takkārikā and belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra and Mādhyandina śākhā.[17]

Mandhata plates of the Paramāra king Devapāla refer to grant of lands to several brāhmaṇas, some of whom came from Takkāri.[18] Viśvesvaraśarman, the son of Āshādhara, grandson of Ḍālana belonged to Bharadvāja gotra and Bharadvāja-Āṅgirasa-Bārhaspatya pravara and was a student of the Kautuma śākhā. Rāmaśarman, another donee from the same place belonged to the same gotra and same pravara. But he was a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā. Mandhata plates of Jayasiṁha-Jayavarman speak of Anantadevaśarman, son of Vīṁkudeveśarman, son of Gajadharaśarman, who belonged to Bharadvāja gotra and three known pravaras and was a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā. Another donee Hariśarman, son of Salūśarman, and grandson of Pradyumnaśarman, who hailed from Takāri also belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra, three pravaras and Mādhyandina śākhā. Śrīkanthaśarman mentioned in the same grant, as son of Uddharaṇaśarman and Dharmadharaśarman, also belonged to Bharadvāja gotra and Āṅgirasa, Bārhaspatya and Bharadvāja pravaras and hailed from Ṭakāri. They were students of the Ṛigveda.

Thus, so many inscriptions issued by so many kings ruling over different parts of the country and ranging in the date between 6th century A.D. to 13th century A.D. connect the brāhmaṇas of Bharadvāja gotra, having Āṅgirasa, Bārhasptya and Bhardvāja pravaras with Ṭakāri and its variant place names. In the light of these inscriptions it would be quite legitimate to conclude that the original village of Ṭakāri, even if the inscriptions do not refer to the same place, was granted to a brāhmaṇa of Bharadvāja gotra with the three pravaras mentioned above. It is interesting to note that most of these Bharadāvjīs were students of the Yajurveda or Vājasaneya charaṇa, or more particularly of the Mādhyandina śākhā, which might have been the śākhā of the original brāhmaṇa donee of

Ṭakāri. Only in two instances such Bharadvājīs are connected with the Ṛigveda. These deviations are not unlikely as we have evidence of changing one's Veda in inscriptions also.

Mandhata plates of Devapāla and of Jayasiṁha-Jayavarman, both belonging to 13th century, speak, however, of a few brāhmaṇa who claim to have come from Takāri but did not belong to the Bharadvāja gotra.[19] The particulars of such donees may by listed here.

Donees	*Gotras*	*Sākhās*
1. Abhinaṁdaśarman	Vatsa gotra	Kauthuma śākha
2. Mādhavaśarman	Gautama gotra	Ṛigveda śākhā
3. Anantaśarman	Vaśishṭh gotra	Mādhyandin śākhā
4. Haridevaśarman	Kātyāyana gotra	Mādhyandina śākhā
5. Yogeśvaraśarman	Ātreya gotra	Mādhyandina śākhā
6. Nārāyaṇaśarman	Vaśishṭha gotra	Kauthuma śākhā
7. Purushaśarman	Sāvarṇi gotra	Kauthama śākhā
8. Three donees	Chandrātreya gotra	Vājasaneya śākhā

The diversity in gotra-names perhaps indicate that they were intruders in Ṭakāri and might have been related to the Bharadvājīs by matrimonial ties or might have developed interests in Ṭakāri otherwise.

Even if Ṭakāris of these inscriptions did not refer to the same place they might have been named from the original one. Such instances are not rare in inscriptions. Cuddalore in the South Arcot District of Tamil Nadu became famous as the agrahāra of Pāṭaliputra "due to the settlement of a group of brāhmaṇas of the ancient city of Pāṭliputra in Bihar in that locality."[20] Several places of Bengal contain names similar to those of U.P. Madhyadeśa bounded by Kośala-Videha on the east and the desert on the west was famous as the land where the Brāhmaṇas and later Saṁhitās were written. So the brāhmaṇas of Madhyadeśa held very honoured position. When they migrated to a new land they often renamed their new settlements after their old habits. Thus we have a second Śrāvasti in Bengal.[21] When brāhmaṇas of such renowned bhaṭṭa-grāmasmigrated to other regions they were eager to pronounce their relationship with the old places. Just like Ṭakāri Kolāñcha was another brāhmaṇical settlement of U.P. which earned wide reputation. There are several inscriptions to show that the brāhmaṇas of Kolāñcha migrated to Bihar, Bengal, Assam and Orissa and wherever they went they did not fail to mention their connection with Kolāñcha, which brought respect for them. The Amgachi grant of Vigrahapāla III records the gift of lands of Vishamapura included within the Kotivarsha vishaya and Pundravardhanabhukti to Khoduladeva-śarman, who was an emigrant from Krodañchi.[22] The Śubhan Karapāṭaka grant of Dharmapāla of Assam records that the donee Himaṅga's family hailed from Krodañcha in Śrāvastī.[23] The Taltali copper-plate of Dharmamahādevī has already been referred to where the donee Padmanābha proclaims that his family originally hailed from Kolāñcha.[24] Such was the prestige of the brāhmaṇas of Kolāñcha that every brāhmaṇa felt proud in tracing his lineage from this place. The Bangaon copper-plate of Vigrahapāla records that Ghaṇṭiśa, a brāhmaṇa officer of the king granted some lands out of his own holdings in favour of Ghaṇṭukaśarman of Śāṇḍilya gotra, who was an inhabitant of Iṭṭāhāka, but whose original homeland was in Kolāñcha. The donor settled this brāhmaṇa out of his own lands because he also had a connection with Kolāñcha. His great-grandmother Iddhahala was the daughter of Gohaṇaka and grand daughter of Kāchchhā who came to Tīrabhukti of North Bihar from Krodañcha.[25] The desire to connect oneself with Kolāñcha through remote relationship and the endeavour to honour that relation speak highly of the hierarchical position which the brāhmaṇas used to hold by merit of their associations with particular places.

Behind the glory of Ṭakāri, Kolāñcha and similar other places were the contributions of the brāhmaṇas who in earlier days through their scholasticity, austerity and sacrifices earned a reputation, the tradition of which lingered and spread like a fragrant flower. What made the brāhmaṇas of Ṭakāri great ? The inscriptions will speak for them. Takāri was a place "where the columns of smoke, rising up from the homa of brāhmaṇas practising donations, frequently repeated in the sacrificial and domestic rites which had grown out of (their) and acquaintance with the Vedas and the Smṛitis, glittered (dark) in the sky, while with their fame, like massed lines of moss playfully floating on an ocean of milk."[26] The study of Vedas and Vedāṅgas coupled with sacrificial activities made Takāri an ideal brāhmaṇical settlement. The inscriptions associated with the names Ṭakāri, Dhakāri etc. also refer to these qualities of the Bharadvājī brāhmaṇas. Abhimanyu, referred to in the plate of Devendravarman, was a master in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas and delighted in the six duties enjoined on the brāhmaṇas.[27] The Mandhata plates of Devapāla mention the donee Viśvesvaraśarman, his father and grandfather who were all master of three Vedas. Hariśarm of the Mandhata plates of Jayasiṁha Jayavarman was a Dvivedī.[28] His father Sotūśarman was also a scholar in two Vedas. Another donee Anantaśarman and his grandfather Gajadharaśarman also belonged to the same category.[29] Śrīkaṇṭhaśarman earned reputation as paṇḍita, his sphere of specialization, however, is unknown to us.[30] The brāhmaṇas who could not master the Vedas at least managed to keep the āvasathika fire kindled in the house.[31] The kings not only honoured the brāhmaṇas of the lineage of Ṭakāri by settling them in their own kingdoms, but also appointed them in important official posts. Manamva of this line became the Mahāpradhāna of Bhillama. His father Śrīvatsa also appears to have held some important post and assumed the title Nāyaka, which was added to the name of his son Manamva also. This Manamva, though an official, did not neglect the duties assigned to his caste and is said to have engaged himself in *svādhyāya-snāna-dāna-paṁchabhūta-yajñāgṛhastha-dharma*.[32]

At the same time it can be shown on the basis of inscriptions that once a village earned such reputation many brāhmaṇas made this place-association their capital without imbibing the quality of their ancestors. The Taltali plates of Dharmamahadevī, referred to earlier, mentions the donee Padmanābha, who originally hailed from Kolāñcha. His father Gadādhara was a Paṇḍita, but he himself did not even care to know the charaṇa and śākhā of the Veda to which he belonged. The charter records, apparently on the evidence supplied by the donee, that he was a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā of the Chhandoga charaṇa,[33] while actually it is a śākhā of the Vājasaneya charaṇa.

If the brāhmaṇas of Ṭakāri reflected a pure brahmanical way of life, those of Daśapura probably stood for another type. Daśapura, identified with modern Mandasor, was an important mercantile city within the kingdom of Avantī (Western Malwa). Avantī was long under the occupation of Śakas and the Hinduised foreigners formed an important section of the populace. The casteless Buddhas and the Magian Sauras had great impact on the land. A Nasik Buddhist cave inscription records the donation of a cave and two cisterns by the Śaka Dāmachika Vudhika, a writer from Daśapura.[34] An inscription of the Gupta period from Mandasor itself speaks of the existence of Lokattara vihāra there, which received patronage from Dattabhaṭa, the son of the Senāpati of Govindagupta, the son of Chandragupta II. He as an humble mark of his desire to requite the obligations of his parents excavated a well and constructed a *stūpa*, a charitable water-stall (*prapā*) and a monastery (*ārāma*) in the said *vihāra.*[35] It is probably under the influence of the Magas that several Sun temples were constructed at Avantī, the best of them being that of Ujjain, referred to in the Saura Purāṇa. The Mandasor inscription of time of Kumāragupta speaks of a Sun temple at Daśapura.[36] Suryadvijas of Avantī, who can be equated with the Magian priests are referred to in the inscriptions from Hund (in Punjab, 8th cent.).[37] The Śaivas and the Vaishṇavas who carried on their missionary activities here naturally could not be orthodox in this social atmosphere. The neo-Vaishṇavas rather sought the co-operation of the Hinduised Śakas. The Nasik inscription of Ushahadāta mentions that the king made donations in favour of gods and brāhmaṇas in different tīrthas, one of which was Daśapura.[38] A Nagarjunikonda inscription shows how Rudradāman, the king of Avantī contributed, along with many other kings, in the installation of the Lord Ashṭabhujasāvamī on the Seṭagiri.[39] As a consequence of these, the caste structure was rather loose in this part of the country. In the Gupta period a group of silk weavers migrated to Daśapura from the Lāṭa country. Some of them retained the old profession and formed themselves into a flourishing guild. But some others adopted different professions, such as that of an archer, a story-teller, an exponent of religious problems, an astrologer, a worrior and an ascetic.[40] Thus, all professions were open to any man of any caste and naturally people could specialize in different branches of learning according to their own choice. The brāhmaṇas also studied various subjects, though not always approved by the orthodox group.

Along with the study of the Vedas they probably liked to discuss the astronomical and astrological problems with the Magas. With the offering of oblations on altars they probably liked to praise the gods through musical chants. This suggestion crops up in our mind because we know that Kālidāsa, a pious brāhmaṇa of Ujjayinī acquired knowledge in different branches of learning including jyotishśāstra and fine arts like music and paintings.[41] Thus it may be suggested that if the brāhmaṇas of Ṭakāri were honoured for their orthodox way of life, those of Daśapura or Avanti were renowned for their liberal and open mind; for their lively interest in different branches of knowledge, of which Jyotishśāstra must have formed an important part. The Daśapurīya or Avantī brāhmaṇas are known to have emigrated in different others kingdoms, where they were honoured with landgrants by the respective kings. The Gurjjara king Dadda IV granted lands to brāhmaṇa Sūrya, of Bharadvāja gotra and a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā of the Yajurveda.[42] The Bonda plates of Mahāśiva Tivara records the donation of land in favour of the donee Vikrama Upādhyāya who originally hailed from Avantī.[43] The Guhila king Bhavihita (7th cent.) granted land to one Āsaṅgaśarman of Dauṇḍāyanagotra and a student of the Mādhyandina śākhā of the Yajurveda whose family migrated from Ujjain.[44]

The importance of Daśapura and Avantī began to decline from the post-Gupta period. Insecure political situation, successive Hūṇā raids, decline in trade and commerce all contributed their shares in making the fate of Daśapura or in the broader way of the kingdom of Avantī. It is to be noted that with the decline of Avantī, the importance of Avantī brāhmaṇas also dwindled considerably.

From 9th century A.D. we get very few epigraphic references to the Daśapurīya or Āvantika brāhmaṇas. Even in the long lists of the brāhmaṇa donees found in the inscriptions of the Paramāras of Malwa there is not a single head who claims to have come from Daśapura or Avantī.[45]

The position of the brāhmaṇas of Mathura can be compared with those of Avantī. Like Daśapura it was also an important centre of trade and commerce. It was not only a great trade market but also stood in the "Grand Route" that connected Pātaliputra with the north-western part of India. Just like any other mercantile city it had a cosmopolitan character, where men of different strata, with different behavioural pattern of life lived side by side. The society, like Daśapura, was flexible and was eager to make room for any and every one who would make the city thrive. The autocthonus people of the region were worshippers of Nāgas and Yakshas, the prevalence of which are indicated by the discovery of Nāga and Yaksha images in and around Mathura.[46] It was a centre of Bhakti movement of the Vaishṇava cult, which had its chief exponents in the five members of the Vrishṇi clan. The Mathura inscription of the time of Śoḍāsa referring to the five heroes of the Vrishṇi clan may be noted in this connection.[47] Śaivism was also a dominant religion here. Moreover there were the Buddhists and the Jains with a number of monasteries of their own. Under such complex social situation the brāhmaṇas of Mathura like those of Daśapura had no other alternative but to be liberal to make them flourish. This is reflected by literature, inscriptions and traditions. Moti Chandra has referred to a story told in the Gilgit manuscript which narrates that when Buddha came to Mathura the brāhmaṇas at first opposed him, but when brāhmaṇa Nīlabhuti offered homage to him others put off their oppositions and recognized him.[48] The brāhmaṇas of Mathura did not hesitate to accept important posts under the kings, even though they were foreign Śūdras. We hear of Śoḍāsa's treasurer who was a brāhmaṇa of Śaigravasa gotra from a Mathura inscription.[49] Such important posts held by them undoubtedly led them to success in other spheres of activities. The brāhmaṇas of Mathura were solvent enough to perform *sattras* which lasted for several days. A yūpa inscription from Isapur near Mathura, belonging to the time of Vāsishka records the performance of a *sattra* far 12 days by the brāhmaṇa Droṇalena of the Bharadvāja gotra.[50] The brāhmaṇas of Mathura, with money in their hands could study various subjects, for which they are still famous. Sherring has noted that they are famous "for their skill and muscular strength, exhibited in wrestling, boxing and other athletic sports."[51] They are also noted for their musical taste. These clearly prove that the brāhmaṇas of Mathura were not of the orthodox type. The liberal attitude of these brāhmaṇas must have induced them to study even the 4th Veda, which was not accepted by the orthodox group. It has already been pointed out that there was a deep autocthonus core of culture in Mathura and this might have been one of the reasons of popularity of the Atharvaveda in this region. Mathura continued to be an important trade market even during the mediaeval period and thus unlike Daśapura it could grow as a centre of brāhmaṇas, particularly of the Chaturvedī type.

The Kalachuri king Sodhadeva (12th cent.) on one occasion granted lands to 14 brāhmaṇas coming from different regions. Two of them emigrated from Mathura.[52] They were Dīkshita Gautama, son of Dīkshita Rāma of Dhaumra gotra and Bahvṛicha Śākhā. The other was Dvivedī Māthe, son of Devadhara of the same gotra and the same śākhā.

Lands were granted to several brāhmaṇas coming from different brāhmaṇic centres by the Paramāra king Devapāla which is accorded in his Mandhata plates.[53] Of these donees 9 came from Mathura. Three generations of each donee have been mentioned and it is noticed that two of them belonged to Trivedī and seven to Chaturvedī families.

1. Trivedī Kuladharaśarman was the son of Trivedī Someśvara and grandson of Trivedī Mādhava. They belonged to the Bharadvāja gotra with three pravaras and to the Rāṇāyaṇīya śākhā.
2. Trivedī Madhusūdanaśarman belonging to the same gotra, pravaras and śākhā, was the son of Trivedī Mārkaṇḍa and grandson of Trivedī Ṛishi.

3. Mahārājāpaṇḍita Śrī Goseśarman was the son of Chaturvedī Dharaṇīdhara and grandson of Chaturvedī Janārdana of Vaśishṭha gotra.

4. Chaturvedī Rāmeśvaraśarman was the son of Chaturvedī Vishṇu and grandson of a Chaturvedī whose name is missing. This family belonged to the Bhārgava gotra.

5. Chaturvedī Garbheśvaraśarman, was son of Chaturvedī Dharaṇīdhara and grandson of Chaturvedī Pavitra. This family also belonged to the Bhārgava gotra but their pravaras were different. While Rameśvara belonged to the Kāśyapa-Āvatsara-Naidhruva pravaras Garbheśvara belonged to Bhārggava-Vaitahavya-Saveta pravaras.

6. Chaturvedī Gadādharaśarman was the son of Chaturvedī Devadharaśarman and grandson of Chaturvedī Samudra. They belonged to the Kāśyapa gotra.

7. Chaturvedī Lahaṭaśarman was the co-uterine brother of Gadādhara.

8. Chaturvedī Udha[ra]śarman, son of Chaturvedī Sadhārana and grandson of Chaturvedī Vishṇu belonged to the Dhaumya gotra.

9. Chaturvedī Rājeśarman was the son of Chaturvedī Janārdana and grandson of Chaturvedī Hari. This family belonged to the Kautsa gotra.

It is interesting that all the Chaturvedī families, referred to in this inscription, though belonged to various gotras, were students of the Āśvalāyana śākhā of the Ṛigveda.

An analysis of the names of the brāhmaṇas of Mathura received from these inscriptions give an account of the state of Brāhmaṇism in existence there. It was a place where Dvivedī, Trivedī and Chaturvedī types of brāhmaṇas could be found. The Chaturvedīs dominated the scene and one among them even became "*mahārāja-paṇḍita.*"

The brāhmaṇas of Mathura not only studied the Vedas but also performed Vedic sacrifices. The tradition of the performance of Somāyaga which was noticed in the inscription of Droṇalena (2nd cent. A.D.) persisted even upto 12th century A.D., as is suggested by the presence of Dīkshita brāhmaṇas in an inscription of this period. This study of the Vedas and the performance of Vedic sacrifices by the brāhmaṇas of Mathura made them honoured and living, in spite of their liberal attitude of life.

The present Māthur Chaturvedīs are said to belong to seven gotras—Bharadvāja, Bhārgava, Daksha, Dhuma, Kautsa, Sausrāvasa and Vaśishṭha. Five of them are also known from inscriptions viz. Bharadvāja, Bhārgava, Dhaumra (from which apparently Dhum is derived), Kutsa and Vaśishṭha. Savrrāvasa gotra reminds us of the brāhmaṇa officer of Śoḍāsa belonging to the Śaigravasa gotra. Daksha gotra has not been traced in inscriptions, while Kāśyapa gotra, found in inscriptions, is not mentioned in the traditional list. The informations relating to the brāhmaṇas of Mathura thus prove that tradition persists and historical development of various regional brāhmaṇical groups may be studied on the basis of inscriptional evidence.

Reference

1. *EI*, XXXII, pp. 45-55.
2. *Pāṇini*, v. 4. 104. *Brāhmāṇo Jānapadākhyāyam.*
3. V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, p. 78.
4. *Manusmṛiti*—VIII. 273.
5. *IHQ*, XXI, p. 220.
6. *EI*, III, p. 348.
7. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, pp. 53-58.
8. *SI*, I, p. 280.
9. *EI*, IX, pp. 109-112.
10. *Ibid.*, III, p. 348.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 353.
12. *Ibid.*, XXIX, p. 89.
13. *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 290.
14. *IA*, XVI, p. 203.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 208.
17. *Ibid.*, XVII, p. 121.
18. *EI*, IX, pp. 110-111.
19. *Loc. cit.*, *ibid.*, p. 122.
20. D.C. Sircar in his key-note address in the Seminar organised by the Centre of AdvanceS tudies in Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University, 1979.

21. D.C. Sircar, *Stud. Soc. Adm. Ane. Med. Ind.*, p. 25.
22. *EI*, XV, p. 293.
23. *KS*, p. 155.
24. *IHQ*, XXI, p. *loc. cit.*
25. *EI*, XXIX, pp. 56-57.
26. *Ibid.*, XIII, p. 292.
27. *IA*, XVII, p. 121.
28. *EI*, IX, p. 110.
29. *Ibid.*, XXXII, pp. 154-155.
30. *Loc. cit.*
31. *Loc. cit.*
32. *Ibid.*, XXI, p. 220.
33. *IHQ*, XXI, p. 220 ff.
34. *EI*, VIII, p. 95.
35. *Ibid.*, XXVII, pp. 12 ff.
36. *CII*, III, p. 83.
37. *EI*, XXII, pp. 97-98; *ibid.*, XXXVIII, pp. 94-98.
38. *SI*, I, p. 168.
39. *EI*, XXXIV, p. 197 ff.
40. *CII*, III, p. 79 ff.
41. *The Classical Age*, p. 303.
42. *CII*, IV, p. 76 ff.
43. *EI*, XXXIV, p. 116.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 170 ff.
45. The existence of the Daśapurīya brāhmaṇa groups is suggested by some late inscriptions. The Chitorgarh inscription of the Guhila king Mokhala (15th cent.) was written by Ekanatha, the son of Bhatta Vishnu. They are said to belong to the Daśapura group. Cf. *EI*, II, pp. 408-421. A brāhmaṇa of Daśapuriya group is referred to in the charter of Rājamalla, the grandson of Mokala.
46. *EI*, I, p. 390; *IA*, XXXIII, p. 102; *EI*, XVII, p. 10; *ASI*, Rep. for 1908-09, p. 161, 162; *SI*, I, p. 93.
47. *SI*, I, p. 122.
48. Moti Chandra, *Trade and Trade Route in Ancient India*, p. 139.
49. *SI*, I, p. 121.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
51. Sherring, *Hindu Castes and Tribes*, I, p. 104.
52. *EI*, VII, p. 92.
53. *Ibid.*, IX, pp. 110-112.

7

TEMPLES AND TEMPLE PRIESTS

With the growth of Paurāṇic Hinduism temples began to be constructed in different parts of India, but that did not bring the temple-priests to higher social position among the priestly class. Manu enjoined not to invite the temple priests to Śrāddha and other auspicious occasions.[1] They were degraded because they lived by the money given to the gods. A very good picture of the character of the temple-priests was provided by Khemendra who said that the sweets and other things offered to the gods in temples were often resold to the public by the priests.[2] For these reasons the temple-priests were called Devakośapajīvī.[3] This might have been one of the causes of degrading them, but there seemed to have some deeper social cause which induced the orthodox group to denounce the temple-priests. The Sāmba Purāṇa has an interesting information in this respect. It says that the Devalakas or temple-priests not only lived on the property of the image but also donounced the Code of Manu.[4] Thus the Devalakas who defined the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra* and followed their own customs were indigenous priests whose inferior status was mainly "due to their being custodians of non-Vedic and non-Aryan tradition."[5]

But as sacrifices lost their popularity among the mass, many of the brāhmaṇas gradually adopted the profession of temple-priests for their livelihood. The liberal section of the brāhmaṇas accepted many popular indigenous gods and goddesses and incorporated them within the fold of Paurāṇic Hinduism. With the rise in status of these local deities, the priests associated with them had also to be upgraded. Thus there were interactions of traffic of the priestly class in two opposite directions, which combined to play their part in the evolution of social status of the priests in temples. This explains the peculiar position of the temple priests who according to Manu, an exponent of the orthodox school, were degraded, but were required to be dvijas of high descent, honest and well versed in the Vedas and the Purāṇas according to the dictum of the Matsya Purāṇa,[6] which voiced the thinking of the liberal group. It is interesting to note that the brāhmaṇas could not replace the indigenous priests every where and there are ample instances to show that in many important temples of India non-brāhmaṇa priests are still intimately associated with the rituals connected with the deities. In the Lingaraj temple of Bhuvaneswar, for example, "there are said to be thirty-two different kinds of services." Of these only "ten are performed by Brāhmaṇa and the rest by non-Brāhmaṇas i.e. men belonging to various castes within the Śūdra orders."[7] The inscriptions would slow that the temple priests were called by various names in different parts of India and some of these names are reminiscent of the indigenous character of the temple priests. Along with this a survey may be made on the deities for whom temples were constructed and donations were made to illustrate the process of development of godheads and of the priests associated with them.

Vedic religion was based on sacrifice. With the rise of Paurāṇic Hinduism a vain attempt was made to popularise the Vedic deities by constructing temples for them. The Nandsa Yūpa inscription records the donations of lands for the temples of Brahmā, Indra, Prajāpati, the Great Sages and Vishṇu.[8] Perhaps a temple of Varuṇa, named as Bhagavān Jalanidhi, is referred to in the Jayarampur copper-plate of Gopachandra.[9] The temple of Brahmā at Pushkara is still an important centre of pilgrimage. But references to temples of Vedic deities are extremely few. Some of them like Vishṇu and Rudra were transformed into Paurāṇic deities and became popular. Others lost their importance. A few deities, however, through peculiar evolutionary process were relegated to the folk-level and are still worshipped in new garbs.

Of the Paurāṇic deities Vishṇu and Śiva, with their female counterparts, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya became prominent. It is well known that behind the popularity of these sects were their associations with indigenous cults and absorbtion of various elements.

In the folk level the Nāgas and the Yakshas played very important role. The huge status of Yakshas and Yakshiṇīs found from Patna, Parkham, Didārganj, Noh were surely housed in particular sacred sites. But gradually they came to hold secondary position in Hindu pantheon and were regarded as semi-divine beings. There are, however, a few interesting records to show that some of them continued to be important deities and earned the patronage of the brāhmaṇa community. Maṇināga, for example, was a famous god among the indigenous people. He seems to be identical with Yaksha Maṇibhadra who was widely worshipped in ancient India. An image of Maṇibhadra has been found from Parkham (1st cent. B.C.) and the label inscription helps in identifying the figure.[10] The Kosam stone inscription of the same period also refers to the god Maṇibhadra and to his temple.[11] Due to his wide popularity Maṇibhadra was accepted as a Paurāṇic diety. Maṇināga, the son of Kadru is famous in the Paurāṇic literature and references to Maṇināga cult have been made in the Skanda Purāṇa.[12] Maṇināga tīrtha of Rājagṛiha is mentioned in the Mahābhārata. Maṇināga cult was very popular in Orissa. There is a hill called Maṇināga hill at Rampur in Orissa and Maṇināga Durgā is still a popular goddess there. Maṇināga peṭha finds its mention in the Khoh C.P. of Śarvanātha.[13] Two inscriptions from Kanas may now be mentioned to show how a group of brāhmaṇas came to be intimately associated with this cult. Lokavigraha granted a village in Dakshiṇa Tosali for the purpose of bali, charu, and sattra at the Matha of the illustrious Maṇināgeśvara bhaṭṭāraka of Ekāmbaka and for the maintenance of the brāhmaṇas of different gotras, who were students of the Maitrāyaṇīya branch of the Yajurveda.[14] Bhānudatta, who belonged to a different royal family and ruled in 7th cent. A.D. also granted lands to the same maṭha and with the same stipulation.[15] Thus these two inscriptions from Kanas supply the interesting information that the brāhmaṇas of the Maitrāyaṇīya branch of Yajurveda were intimately associated with this cult, at least in this particular region.

Inscriptions can also show that there were many local deities who in particular region exerted great influence on the people. The Khoh copper-plate of Sarvanatha records that the king granted half of the village of Dhavashaṇḍika to Chhodugamika for the purpose of the repairs of whatever may become broken or torn, belonging to the divine goddess Pishṭa-purikādevī and for the maintenance of bali, charu and sattra.[16] Chhodugomika was apparently the priest of the temple of the said goddess. The absence of the gotra of Chhodugomika, coupled with his name itself indicates that he was not brāhmaṇa by caste. But the mention of the words bali, charu, sattra in connection with the worship of the goddess makes it clear that Pishtapurikādevī was incorporated with in the fold of brāhmaṇical deities. Same Sarvvanātha granted two villages to Pulindabhatta, who on his turn gave them to Kumārasvāmin for the purpose of the worship of the divine goddess Pishtapurikādevī at the temple which he caused to be built at Mānapura and for the purpose of repairing whatever may become broken or torn.[17] The language of the inscription suggests that this temple was different from the other one mentioned earlier. Popularity of the Pishtapurikādevī might have induced Pulindabhatta to built another temple for this goddess, at Mānapura. But in the new temple a brāhmaṇa, Kumārasvāmin by name, was appointed as the priest. Thus these two inscriptions taken together provide very good evidence of, what the sociologists say, Sanskritization.

This process of Sanskritization is always slow and sometimes very difficult, if the indigenous core is too strong to mould. Two very interesting inscriptions were found while reclaiming a tank at Basupara in the village of Vajrayogini in Vikrampur, Dist. Dacca, Bangladesh. The inscriptions are inscribed on tortoise shells and one of the inscriptions makes it clear that they represented Dharma. This Dharma Ṭhākur is a very popular folk deity of Bengal. The present inscriptions would show how this folk deity incorporated different elements of higher religion. The inscriptions are given below.

No. 1

1. [Symbol] *Śrī namo bhagavate Vāsudevaya/namo Buddhyāya*
2. *Svasti niśreyasāp-āstu Jino janānāṁ//śrī*
3. *ma namo bhagavate*
4. *Manaṁraśarmma-kārita-Dharma/Śrī*
5. *namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya*

No. 2 Unfinished.

1. [Symbol] *Svasti ni-Śreyasāy—āstu Jino janānām//*
2. [Symbol] *na*

[Translations—No. 1] [Let there be success] Śrī Adoration to the worshipful Vāsudeve. Adoration to the Buddha. May the Jina be for the prosperity and salvation of the people. Śrī. Adoration to the most worshipful one. [This is an image of] Dharma caused to be made by Manaṁraśarman. Śrī. Adoration to the most worshipful Vāsudeva.

[No. 2] May the Jina be for the prosperity and salvation of the people.[18]

These inscriptions show how Dharma has been associated with Vishṇu and Buddha as early as the 10th or 11th century A.D. and how the brāhmaṇas like Manamra-śarman enlisted their regard for this folk deity. Scholars have pointed out on the basis of literature and rites connected with the Dharma cult that it incorporated different elements of Vedic god Varuṇa also.[19] Dharma is sometimes identified with Śiva.[20] He is "associated with the Sun among the primitive tribal folk of Chhotanagpur."[21]

Due to this admixture of various religious force in the Dharma-cult there are still rivalry among the priestly class over the control of worship of the deity in various localities. Generally the priest of Dharma-worship is a Dom Pandit. But in some localities degraded brāhmaṇas also act as priests. In some other again Grahavipras of Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas are serious rivals of the Dom Paṇḍits, so far as the worship of Dharma is concerned. K.P. Chattopadhyaya informed us that in the Vīrasiṁhagrāma of Midnapur a Grahavipra acted as the priest. The songs of Dharma cult were sung with dances and dramatic gestures by the Vyāsastha brāhmaṇas, who were degraded as priests of the Kaivartas.[22]

The whole account of the Dharma-cult makes it very clear that often folk deities played so important a part in particular localities that various higher religions tried to capture the god. But if the indigenous element was very strong the god absorbed Sanskritic elements no doubt but retained his folk character and continued to be the god of the mass.

Let us now turn to the priests. The Manchikallu inscription of the Pallava king Simhadeva (3rd cent. A.D.) records some gifts by the king in favour of the *Tairthikas* of the temple of Jīvaśivasvāmin, for they performed *Śānti* and *Svastyayana* for his victory and for the increase of his merits and prowesses.[23] The temple priests were called Tairthikas, a term derived from the word tīrtha, the concept of which is said to be anti-Vedic. The performance of *śāntika* and *paushṭika karmas* by the said Tairthikas for the king is also noteworthy, as these acts were intimately associated with the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas. The term *Pāṇḍā*, which also designated priest, is another name to be intimately associated with a tīrtha. The term in not found in early inscriptions, but social acquaintance with this term is well indicated by the cognomens Pāṇḍā and Pāṇḍe. A 13th century inscription from Jatanpal (Baster Shate) records the name of Rahila Pāṇḍe, as donee and of Medani Pāṇḍe, as one of the protectors of the grant.[24] The Tairthikas of the Manchikalla inscription performed *śānti-svastyayana* for the king. The modern *tīrtha-pāṇḍās* also perform propitiatory rites for their *yajamānas*.

The British Museum plates of the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Govinda III records that the king was pleased to see the beauty of the Rāmeśvara tīrtha and made a grant of land in favour of the *Gorava* Śivadhāri who apparently was a priest of the temple of that tīrtha.[25]

There are reasons to believe that with the 'Sanskritization' of temple priests many of them were either raised to brāhmaṇahood or were replaced by the brāhmaṇas, though old designations continued to be applied to them. A few examples may be given from inscriptions. In the region of Kanker and Bastar *Gaṁtā* or *Gaitā* is a term applied to village priests. This term is found in the inscription of the Kalachuri king Pamaparājadeva.[26] The king donated some lands to Gaita Lakshmīdhara of Ghṛitakauśika gotra, who was a student of the Yajurveda. He was a hereditary priest and his father and grandfather also held the same post. A year before the execution of this charter another business document was made at the royal residence in favour of this Lakshmīdhara. Among the witness of this transaction mention may be made of Bhaṭṭa Rāṇaka Govinda and Gaintā Maheśvara, to show that temple priests were distinguished from other brāhmaṇas.

The *Āboṭis* provide another example of the same situation existing in another part of India. The Bhinmal stone inscription of Udayasiṁhadeva (13th cent.) records two benefactors in favour of the Sun god Jagatsvāmin. Both of these endowments allow a dole of 1 dramma to the Āboṭi.[27] The Āboṭis of western India are generally temple priests and are regarded as brāhmaṇas of inferior status. Their association with temples is attested by the Nāḍol stone inscription of Rājyapāla (12th cent.). Here the Āboṭi Sāgāhāri has been associated with the temple of Pṛithvīpateśvara, Āboṭi Jagadharu to the temple of Āsaleśvara and Āboṭi Śrī-Vachu to the temple of Tripurusha. All these three Āboṭis belonged to Dvārāvatī,[28] i.e. Dvaraka, which is still the centre of concentration of the Āboṭi brāhmaṇas. The examples of the priests called Gaitā or Āboṭi as presented above clearly indicate that though brāhmaṇas came to be associated with these posts their social position was not and still is not very commendable one.

The usual designation of a priest, known from the Purāṇas, was *Devalaka*. Dive Agar Marathi copper-plate inscription (11th cent.) mentions one *Devalu* Dive, who along with others was an witness to an endowment.[29] The term is obviously derived from the word Devalaka. Among the Chitpavan brāhmaṇas of Maharashtra the surname Devalu is found. In the Bhuvaneswar inscription of Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga reference has been made to a person whose name started with Śrī-Raman and who was a Devakarmin,[30] apparently a local variant of the term Devalaka.

The Devalakas were scoffed at because they earned their livelihood from the property of the god. This probably gave birth to the name *Pujāhārī*, given to the temple priests. Puri inscription of Anantavarman Choḍagaṅga speaks of Hari who was the Pujāhārī of the god Mārkaṇḍeśvara, and of Vasu, the Pūjāhārī of another temple, the name of which cannot be definitely read.[31] *Pūjārī*, a term derived from it is now a common designation of temple priests.

There is a very interesting inscription of about 4th-5th century A.D. from Bhagalpur which shows how the priests managed to earn money from the temples of their own. It records that one. Vishṇuśarman son of Bharadvāja gotra was the *Pādamūla* of the god Virajaguhasvāmi. He constructed a Devakula and a sattra of the lord. By the present inscription it was ordered that whatever would be given by the people to the said religious establishment would go to this Vishṇudatta.[32] If Pādamūla means a temple priest the inscription under discussion points out clearly that constructions of temples were avenues of income for the priests and they were justified to be sneered at as Devakośapajīvi.

But in some localities temple priests were highly honoured from a much early period. Tusam rock inscription (5th century A.D.) speaks of *Āchārya* Somatrāta of Gotama gotra who was a Satvata.[33] The Mahābhārata describes the worshippers of Vishṇu-Vāsudeva as Sattvatas.[34] Govindarāja while commenting on Manu said that the Sattvatas were worshippers of gods and subsisted by serving the temples.[35] If Somatrāta also was a temple priest the application of the highly honoured title Āchārya to him indicates that he was in high estimation of at least a considerable section of the population of a particular locality.

The term Āchārya continued to be the designations of temple priests in wide regions and for a long period. The land stone inscription of Yuvarāja Mallikārjuna, for example, records a gift in favour of Āchārya Someśvara Paṇḍita, the priest of the temple of Someśvara, for the daily worship of the god.[36] The term Paṇḍita associated with the name of Someśvara indicates that he was not a mere priest but was a master in some branches of learning. Learned priests like Someśvara must have contributed their shares in increasing the social status of some of the temple priests.

It is also true that with the encroachment of this profession by brāhmaṇas of high descent the status of the temple priests began to increase. The Ekallahara grant of Trilochanapāla (11th cent.), a feudatory of the Chālukyas of Gujarat, records the grant in favour of Tārāditya of the Bharadvāja gotra, Āṅgirasa, Bārhaspatya and Bharadvāja pravaras, who was the *Sthānika* (priest) of an unidentified *mūlasthana* (temple).[37] Devarāya II, the king of Vijayanagara, made a gift in favour of a donee of Kāśyapa gotra and Āśvalāyana sūtra, who was the permanent and hereditary servant of the god and was the Sthānapati of the temple of Śrīraṅgam.[38] In these cases the priests have been mentioned with reference to their respective gotras and once to the Vedic śākhā also. This is in conformity with the statement of the Matsya Purāṇa mentioned above which required the temple priests to be brāhmaṇas of high descent and well versed in the Vedas.

An idea of the gradual increase in status of the temple priests may be gathered from an inscription of the Western Chālukya king Someśvara II. King Vidyāditya Satyāśraya made some grants in favour of the god Pañchaliṅgadeva. While renewing the grant Someśvara II sent for the *Mahāsthānapati* of this temple and after laving the feet of the priest with water of Kṛishṇavennā made over the gift. It may be mentioned in this connection that the said priest was a paṇḍita from Kashmir.[39]

There are many other terms which are applied to the temple priests living in different corners of the country, but here only a few of them have been chosen from inscriptions to illustrate the growth and development of the institution of priesthood in temples.

With the stabilization of their power the temple priests were able to conduct multifarious activities taking the temples as their base and the temples now became centres of radiation of brāhmaṇical culture. The temples expanded into maṭhas, maṭhas turned into colleges and centres of some other social activities. There are some interesting inscriptions through which the process can be known. From the Kolhapur inscription of Bhoja II it is learnt that one Lokaṇa Nāyaka founded a maṭha (i.e. a temple).[40] The king Bhoja on the occasion of Uttarāyana granted lands to four brāhmaṇas, Āditya-bhaṭṭa Lakshmīdhara-bhaṭṭa, Prabhākara-ghāisasa and Vasiyana-ghāsisasa, who were settled in the maṭha of Lokaṇa-Nāyaka, for performing the worship of the deities and for keeping the maṭha in proper repair. Two years later Lokaṇa's son Kaliyāṇa granted to these brāhmaṇas some property for the purpose of feeding the brāhmaṇas at a Sattra established by his mother. Some months later Kaliyāṇa again granted some lands to the same four brāhmaṇas for the purpose of the pupils at the school established for the study of the Vedas.[41]

Many of the maṭhas, particularly of the South, were renowned colleges, where competent teachers imparted lessons in different subjects. Grants were made in favour of the maṭhas, with concrete stipulation that the money would be spent for various reasons including "the food and clothing of student ascetics and scholars reading and hearing lectures; and for the professors lecturing to them.[42] Another inscription of Someśvara IV records that the king donated some lands in favour of a temple with the desire that the income could be spent for the god as well as for scriptural study, lectures on the Vaiśeshika and class reading of the Śiva-Purāṇas.[43] In the Visveswara Golaki maṭha there were three teachars. Two of them taught the Ṛig and the Yajur-Vedas and the third one taught Grammar and Rupāvatāra.[44] These maṭhas played very important role in counteracting Buddhism in the South by making parallel or even better monastic organisations. In fact the Badaum stone inscription of Lakhanapāla proclaims that the king's preceptor Varmaśiva, who was the pontiff of a Śaiva maṭha was responsible for checking the rise of the Buddhist in the South.[45]

These temples were mediums of mass education also. There were Pāthakas attached to the temples who read out before the congregation of people the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Purāṇas and

Nītiśāstras. We have an inscription which records that out of the income of the temple money was spent for the reading of the Mahābhārata in the temple of Peruneydal village.[46] The inscription of the Eastern Gaṅga king Anaṅgabhīma III refers to Mahādeva Pāthin who was attached to the Liṅgarāja temple. He was a man of considerable importance, so far as temple management was concerned.[47]

Common people were educated and entertained through the functions organized by the temples. On different festive occasions dramas with Epico-Paurāṇic themes were staged, music and dances were performed, which had an immense effect on the mass mind. An inscription of Pṛithivīchandra Bhogaśakti (8th cent.), a feudatory of the Western Chālukyas refers to a *Yātrā* festival arranged by the Vaishṇava temple at Jayapura. It lasted for a whole fortnight in the month of Mārgaśīrsha. King Bhogaśakti made a grant for conducting the worship of god Nārāyaṇa as well as for dance, music, free kitchen etc. during the time of the *Yātrā*.[48]

Not only mass contacts were facilitated through the mediums of temples, but economic activities also revolved round many of them. Trading guilds were benefited by the growth of temples as money came to be invested in guilds by endowments for the benefit of the temples. The Nasik Cave inscription of Nahapāna records the investment of money in mercantile guilds with fixed rate of interest for the benefit of the Buddhist monks.[49] Similar investments were made for brāhmaṇical temples also. The Indor copper-plate inscription of Skandagupta records a permanent endowment to a guild of oil-men by the brāhmaṇa Devavishṇu for the purpose of maintaining a lamp in a temple of Sun-god at Indrapura (mod. Indor).[50]

Sometimes the deity also gave money to merchants, apparently to carry on their business, in lieu of certain provisions made for Him or Her. Ahar stone inscriptions are interesting in this respect.[51] One of these documents informs that two merchants Bhadraprakāśa and Mauṁka purchased with drammas belonging to the illustrious goddess Kañchanadevī an *āvārī* (a shop or enclosure) which contained three rooms, together with entire elevation and that the community of the Sauvarṇika traders stood for guarantee that out of the rent of this *āvārī* funds would be provided for perpetual cleaning and plastering, saffron, flowers, incense, lamps, flags, whitewashing and the repairs of broken and cracked buildings of the temple. These inscriptions show that many such *āvārīs* of the locality were owned by gods and goddesses. Document no VI for instance, states that an *āvārī* was purchased with money belonging to Kaṇakaśrīdevī (same as Kāñchanadevī). While referring to the boundary of this shop mention has been made of another *āvārī* of Gandhaśrīdevī Document no. VII speaks of Daśāvatāradeva and another of Sarvamaṅgalāmahādevī.

The temples opened an avenue of income for the common people, who started shops in and around the temple precinct to attract the pilgrims, who came to pay their reverence to the god. Shops in rows are still attractive features of important temples throughout India. The Haṁseśvara temple inscription records the construction of a Śive temple in the name of the queen of Subhākara I. This inscription also speaks of a *haṭṭa* or market which "seems to have been established or organised in a locality in the vicinity of the temple."[52] The income of this haṭṭa apparently was assigned to the temple.

Apart from these permanent shops periodical fairs were held in temples on different occasions. The dates of the fairs in particular localities were so fixed as to enable the traders to move from one place to another. They carried with them not only their products, but also the legends connected with different deities and their surroundings. In this connection mention may be made of Ghoṭakayātrās where animals were sold. The Peheva inscription records that in the piśācha-chaturdaśī such a fair was held every year at Prithudaka, which was sacred due to the temple of Vishṇu, in the form of a boar. The same dealers moved with their animals in other places like Traighaṭaka and Kānyakubja. They agreed to give a certain portion of their income as permanent endowments in favour of various temples in different localities. The money thus collected was divided into different shares, which went to the gods of temples built by

Guhādītya at Kānyakubja, built by Bhuvaka at Bhojapura near Kānyakubja, and to another built by Kadambāditya. The Vishṇu temple and the scared place of Pṛithudaka also had their shares. The priest of the Vishṇu temple of Pṛithudaka also received a share of this income.[53]

Thus the temples refrained from being mere religious institutions. They became sources of dynamic socio-economic activities. What the Smārta-Paurāṇic brāhmaṇas wanted to do for the propagation of the "Sanātana dharma" could now very well be done through the medium of temples and temple-priests. The power and prestige of a temple priest also increased with the relative growth in importance of its presiding deity.

As the temples became centres of attraction of all classes of people, from the king down to his humble subject, the pulse of the society can be felt by the study of inscriptions which throws light on various aspects and facets of temple-activities. The point may be illustrated with reference to the institution of Devadāsi. Upto the Gupta period all that we know about temples from inscriptions, is about endowments made in favour of gods. The aspect of Bhakti "and acquisition of merit got prominence in these gifts. The institution of Devadāsī though in existence at that time also were not focussed through epigraphs. But in course of time it became so important an institution that several inscriptions refer to them.

The Devadāsīs in course of time became Vilāsinīs, a term by which they are referred to in the stray inscription from Nanana.[54] The Jogimara cave inscription while bringing to light the pathos in the life of a rupadaksha speaks of irregular relationship which the Devadāsis had with different types of people. Rupadaksha Devadatta loved Sutanukā, a devadāsī in a temple at Varanasi,[55] but could not go beyond that relation. Some of these Meharis (same as devadāsīs) were so important that kings also visited their houses and gratified the visit by grants of villages. Śobhikā, referred to in the Vanana inscription, was one such Mehari who was granted a village on the occasion of the Chāhamāna king Āśārāj's visit to her place.[56]

But in spite of such known illicit relationships people considered it meritorious to construct temples adorned with devadāsīs and to make endowments for the benefit of them. The Ittagi inscription records the grant of houses for the davadāsīs and other attendants of the gods at Ittagi by a brāhmaṇa donor.[57] Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva who was a renowned brāhmaṇa scholar of Bengal is known to have constructed a temple at Puri, where he claims to have appointed devadāsīs.[58] The description of the devadāsīs which we get from his inscription is bereft of all higher ideal and are full of gross sensual, physical descriptions. This physical aspect of the devadāsīs were often focussed while referring to them. The Chāhamana king Jōjalladeva by an ordinance asked the courtezans of all temples to come in their best dresses to celebrate a festival with music.[59]

What ever the vilāsinīs did were obviously approved by the temple authorities, because, as it is known from the Nanana inscription, they were under the direct control and supervision of the temple-priests. Near the temple of Tripurusha, so goes the inscription, there was another temple of Chaṇḍaleśvara. A village was granted to Tripurusha with the stipulation that a part of the income accruing from it would be spent for the training, food etc. of the vilāsinīs attached to the god Chaṇḍaleśvara. The priests (*vārikas*) of the temple of Tripurusha were empowered to look into these matters.[60] Thus, a study on the institute of devadāṣī not only throws light on the character of these poor girls but also on the contemporary society, where temples were expressions of feudal-powers, with the relevant vices attached to them.

Reference

1. *Manusmṛti*, III, 152.
2. *Samaya-mātṛkā*, II, 11.
3. *Smṛti Chandrikā*, II, p. 396.
4. Hazra, *Studies in the Upa-Purāṇas*, I, p. 40.
5. S. Jayaswal, *The Origin and Development of Vaishṇavism*, p. 134.
6. *The Matsya Purānam*, pt. II, p. 318.
7. *JASB*, L, XXIV, p. 92.

8. *EI*, XXVII, p. 264.
9. *OHRJ*, XI, p. 229ff.
10. *EI*, XVIII, p. 159.
11. *SI*, I, pp. 97-98.
12. *The Skanda Purāṇa*, *Avanti Khaṇda*, *Revā Khanda*, chap. 72.
13. *CII*, III, p. 136.
14. *EI*, XXVIII, p. 331.
15. *Ibid*., p. 336.
16. *CII*, III, pp. 129-132.
17. *Ibid*., pp. 135-139.
18. The inscriptions and their translations are quoted from D.C. Sircar's article published in *JASB*, L, XV, pp. 101-108.
19. *JASB*, *L*, (1942), pp. 132-133.
20. P.K. Mahapatra, *The Folk Cults of Bengal*, p. 101.
21. *JASB*, *L*, VIII, p. 133.
22. *Ibid*., pp. 110-111.
23. *EI*, XXXII, pp. 87-90.
24. *Ibid*., X, p. 42.
25. *Ibid*., XXXIII, p. 331.
26. *Ibid*., IX, p. 166 ff; *CII*, IV, pt. II, p. 598.
27. *EI*, XI, p. 55 ff.
28. *Ibid*., pp. 37-41.
29. *Ibid*., XXVIII, p. 124.
30. *Ibid*., XXX, p. 32.
31. *Ibid*., XXXIII, p. 185.
32. *Ibid*., XXXVI, p. 305.
33. *CII*, III, p. 270.
34. R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaishṇavism*, *Śaivism and minor religious systems*, p. 8.
35. *SBE*, XXV, p. 407, foot note 23.
36. *EI*, XXVIII, p. 35.
37. *Ibid*., XXXVI, p. 12 ff.
38. *Ibid*., XXVIII.
39. *Ibid*., XXXVI, p. 17.
40. *Ibid*., XXIX, p. 13 ff.
41. *Ibid*., III, p. 213 ff.
42. *Ibid*., XII, p. 289.
43. *Ibid*., XIV, p. 273.
44. *Ibid*., XXI, p. 222.
45. *Ibid*., I, p. 65.
46. *Ibid*., XVIII, p. 340 ff.
47. *Ibid*., XXX, p. 197 ff.

48. *Ibid.*, XXV, p. 225 ff.
49. *SI*, I, p. 164-166.
50. *CII*, III, p. 70.
51. *EI*, XIX, pp. 52 ff.
52. *Ibid.*, XXVIII, pp, 180 ff.
53. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 186-188.
54. *Ibid.*, XXXIII, p. 244.
55. *Luders' List* no. 921.
56. *EI*, XXXIII, p. 245. There is an interesting inscription which expressly tells that the devadasis often became concubines of the kings. The Ratnagiri copper-plate inscription of the Somavamsi king Karna (12th cent.) records the grants of a village by the king in favour of Rani Karpurasri, the daughter of Mahari Mahunadevi and the pautri of Udayamati. Thus Karpurasri was the daughter of a Mehari or Devadasi, who was attached to the Buddhist monastery of Salonapura. D.C. Sircar suggests that she might have been purchased by the king from the authorities of the monastery. This inscription therefore proves that in the early medieval period Devadasis were maintained in brahmanical temples as well as in Buddhist monasteries and character of them was the same. Cf. *EI*, XXXV, p. 97.
57. *EI*, XIII, pp. 37-58.
58. *IB*, III, p. 35.
59. *EI*, XI, pp. 26-27.
60. *Ibid.*, XXXIII, p. 244.

8

SOME DEGRADED BRAHMANAS

I. THE ATHARVAVEDĪ BRĀHMAṆAS

There existed in ancient India two schools of thought, orthodox and liberal, recognising the Vedas as three or four in number. Manu, an exponent of the former school, says : "The Ṛik, the Yajur (formulas) which differ from the former, the manifold Sāmas (songs) must be known (to form) the triple Veda; he who knows them (is called) learned in the Veda."[1] Baudhāyana who probably flourished much earlier than Manu was, however, progressive enough to include the Atharvaveda as a subject of study.[2] The orthodox school sneered at this Veda as it manifested the hopes and aspirations, thoughts and beliefs of the common people as opposed to the higher religious thoughts embodied in the other three Vedas. The Atharvaveda contained prayers for happy and prosperous life, charms for longivity and cure of diseases, hymns to free from guilt and sin. They had charms for the fulfilment of mundane desires and curse for those who stood on the way. Thus the purpose of the Atharvaveda was "to appease, to bless and to curse." One can easily visualise a society where the intelligentia was inclined to decry charms and sorcery, because they may be blessings as well as curse for the society. There can be no end of charms used against one another. But as the followers of the Atharvaveda were not nominal and as many of the Atharvavedins mastered different branches of technical and practical sciences they were difficult to be ignored; and even an orthodox like Manu had to say that when other methods fail one can take recourse to the Atharvavedic charms.[3]

That the Atharvaveda was once very popular is suggested by the fact that at least nine versions of this Veda are known to have existed at one time.[4] But so far as extant specimens are concerned only two of them—Śaunakīya and Paippalāda have so far been traced.[5] Mahidāsa, while commenting on the *Charaṇavyuha* of Śaunaka informs that the sphere of influence of the Śaunaka and the Paippalāda schools were respectively the northern and southern sides of the Narmada.[6] But interestingly enough manuscripts of the Paippalāda school have been found only from Kashmir and Orissa. Inscriptions speak of Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas of the Paippalāda śākhā residing in Bengal.[7] It seems that the Paippalāda school was very popular and was spread all over India and was not localised in the region lying south of the Narmada. A commentary on the Gopālatāpani Upanishad informs that this school was widely prevalent in the Gurjjara country and the brāhmaṇas of the Parāśara gotra were followers of this Veda.[8] In the Ahmedabad-Pune regions there exists a group of brāhmaṇas who call themselves Śaunaka-Paippalādins. Many of them consider themselves as Paippalādins but recite the Śaunaka mantras. . At present the Atharvavedins are few in number, they being mainly localised in western India. D. Bhattacharya has traced some Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas of the Paippalāda school in Orissa. But the literary and epigraphical evidence suggest that the Atharvavedins had in ancient time colonies as far north as Kashmir and as far south as the Chola country. They penetrated as far east as Bengal and Orissa and as far west as the Gujarat region.

From the inscriptions at our disposal the following list of the gotras of the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas can be collected.

1. Ātreya gotra[9]
2. Bharadvāja gotra[10]
3. Bhālandāyana gotra[11]
4. Chaüliya gotra[12]

5. Darbhi gotra[13]
6. Droṇāyana gotra[14]
7. Garga gotra[15]
8. Gautama gotra[16]
9. Harkkari gotra[17]
10. Kapiñjala gotra[18]
11. Kālāsa gotra[19]
12. Kāśyapa gotra[20]
13. Kaimbala gotra[21]
14. Kotsa gotra[22]
15. Kauśika gotra[23]
16. Kauśrāvasa gotra[24]
17. Parāśara gotra[25]
18. Paippalādi gotra[26]
19. Śaṅkha gotra[27]
20. Srāvisṭhāyana or Śrāvishṭha gotra[28]
21. Valandata gotra[29]

Many of these gotras are not found in the texts dealing with the gotras. They are (1) Chaüliya, (2) Kālāsa, (3) Kaimbala, (4) Srāvishṭhāyana or Srāvishṭha and (5) Valandata. It is not unlikely that by the time when the texts like *Gotra-pravara-mañjari* or *Gotra-pravara-nibandka-kadamba* were written the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇa families of these gotras lost their social position and became extinct. It is possible that these families were originally native people practising magico-religious rites, who due to their position had to be incorporated within the fold of Vedic Brāhmaṇism, but gradually they were ousted by their powerful opponents. It should be remembered that some of the above gotras were prevalent not only in a particular region but in widely separated places. For example, the Srāvishṭhāyana gotra which is found in the Basim copper-plate of Vindhyaśakti[30] is also found in the Sangoli grant of the Kadamba king Harivarman.[31] The Chaüli gotra is found in the Kadamba country[32] as well as in the Gurjara country and is referred to in the Kaira copper-plates of Dadda II.[33] The list of the gotras of the Atharvavedins show a few more interesting points. Pippalāda, who was the founder of a school of the Atharvaveda, finds a place here, but the name of Śaunaka is yet to come. In the Gotra-pravara-nibandha-kadamba there is reference to Harkari gotra which in the light of the Tirodi copper-plates of Pravarasena II is a mistake for Harkari gotra.[34] The Parāśara gotra which is found at present among the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas of western India is also found in the inscription. What is all the more interesting, in the Belwa copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III is that there is a reference to one Atharvavedī brāhmaṇa, Jayanta-devaśarman by name. He was of the Bharadvāja gotra having the Bharadvāja, Āṅgirasa and Vārhaspatya pravaras.[35] Some of the Raḍhī bāhmaṇas of Bengal, belonging to the Sāmaveda, have exactly the same gotra and the same pravaras.

As far as the name endings of these brāhmaṇas are concerned, they do not show any peculiarity. The names of all the twelve brāhmaṇas referred to in the Basim plate of Vindhyaśakti and the one mentioned in the Tirodi plates of Pravarasena II ended in ārya. The Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas of Valabhi region had different name endings, such as śarman, svāmi, ghosha and yaśas.[36] The suffix śarman has been added to their names in the grants of the Kadambas, Gurjjaras, Pālas and Senas.[37] Gopa, ghosha and yaśas are some of the name endings which are prevalent among the present Nāgara brāhmaṇas of Western India and the Atharvavedīns form a formidable group among these brāhmaṇas. In the Bengal Asiatic Society grant of Mahendrapāla the Atharvavedī donee has the prefix bhaṭṭa added to his name.[38] In the Godavari grant the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas, receiving the land grant, are said to have belonged to the families of Upādhyāya,[39] which might have been used by them as their name endings. Rarely the names of Atharvavedī donees have been mentioned without any prefix or suffix, e.g. Śambhulla, son of Dattila.[40] Like the name endings, the names of these brāhmaṇas show little peculiarity. They have the usual names, taken mainly from the names of divinities. Peculiar names such as Bhalluka are rare.[41]

Most of the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas seem to have been followers of Śaivism. Pippalāda, who was an exponent of the Atharvaveda, has been called in the *Skanda Purāṇa* as an incarnation of Śiva (Kedārakhaṇḍa, Adh. 16.90). It narrates the story of Pippalāda, who is said to have born to popularise the Atharvaveda. He is associated with the Nāgara brāhmaṇas and the worship of Śiva. Śani, the son of Sūrya is intimately connected with Pippalāda in this story (174-176 chaps). The Nāgara brāhmaṇas, among whom a formidable section is Atharvavedin, were worshippers of Hāṭakeśvara Śiva (Sk. Purāṇa, Nāgara Khaṇḍa). Epigraphic reference also hints to this. The Nirmand copper-plate records allotment of a village to a body of brāhmaṇas who studied the Atharvaveda for the purpose of the maintenance of the temple of Mihireśvara, installed by the king Samudrasena's mother Mihiralakshmī. The deity was previously called Kapāleśvara.[42] David N. Lorenzen on the basis of this inscription has suggested the association of the Atharvavedins with the Kāpālikas, who worship god Kapāleśvara, a tantric form of Śiva.[43] Chintaharan Chakravarti has shown that many of the tantras in fact have drawn their inspiration from the Atharvaveda.[44] It seems that where Śiva and Mihira have been associated together, the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas also associated themselves with the Magian cult. For this reason it is often said that the Āṅgirasas and Bhāradvājas resembled the Magas in their manners.[45] The Purāṇas also associate the Āṅgirasas and the Atharvan with the Sun-cult.

We have already noted in the introduction the nature of function that the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas had to do. According to the Dharmaśāstras they should act as the Purohita of the king and perform religious rites for the increase of prosperity of the king and his kingdom.[46] The inscriptions tend to corroborate the literary evidence. The Neulpur copper-plate grant of Subhākara which records the grant of two villages among the brāhmaṇas versed in the 4 vedas mentions the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇa Bhanudevabhaṭṭa as a *purohita.*[47] Vindhyaśakti granted lands to the twelve Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas for victory in war, for the increase of life and power and for invoking blessings and peace in this world and the next.[48] The

Tirodi plates of Pravarasena II mentions that the grant was made "in order to increase our religious merit, life, power and prosperity, to secure our well-being in this world and the next and also to augment the religious merit of our mother. . . . . . ."[49] Mirashi has pointed out that all the charters of Pravarasena II, except the one mentioned above, were issued from his capital Pravarapura. But the present charter was issued from Narattaṅgavāri, which must have been a holy place (tīrtha), where the king had gone with his mother to take a bath in the month of Māgha, which is praised in the Purāṇas as very sacred. Similarly, the Belwa copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III was also issued by the king after a holy bath in the Gaṅgā on the occasion of the Vishuvat-Saṅkrānti.[50] The copper-plate of Mahendrapāla also records a grant made after a ceremonial bath in the Gaṅga.[51] Since the grant was made to increase the religious merits of the donor's parents only, Fleet suggested that the grant was made on the occasion connected with the *Pitṛitarpaṇa.* Can we suggest on the basis of these inscriptions that some of the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas were tīrtha pāṇḍās, who perform propitiatory rites by the side of the holy river ?

The Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas were specially proficient for the *Śāntika* and *paushṭika karmas*. By the Goa plates of the Kadamba king Tribhuvanamalla lands were granted to two Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas who are said to have been well-versed in the *Śāntika-paushiṭka mantras* and *tantras*.[52] The Madhainagar copper-plate of Lakshmaṇasena is informative and interesting in this respect. It records the grant of land in favour of Śāntyāgārika Govinda-devaśarman on the occasion of the Aindrī Mahāśānti ceremony.[53] In the Adbhutasāgara of Ballalasena the Aindrī Mahāśānti ceremony is prescribed at the time of coronation, as well as in case of apprehension of invasion and actual invasion of the kingdom. The ceremony may be done for killing the enemy, who has devastated the kingdom. When Ikhtiyaruddin Muhammad invaded Nadia Lakshmaṇasena fled away to the eastern part of Bengal and it is not unlikely that the Aindrī Mahāśānti ceremony was performed with the hope of acquiring the lost territories.[54]

A few of the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas have been praised in the inscriptions for their scholarship. In the Tirodi plates of Pravarasena II the donee has been called a master of the three Vedas. The Belwa copper-plate of Vigrahapāla III mentions that the donee Jayantadevaśarman was a master in the mīmāṁsā, grammar and logic. The two donees referred to in the Goa plates of Tribhuvanamalla were the chief Paurāṇikas of the king, suggesting thereby that they were considered authorities on the Purāṇas. So far only one inscription has been found which has been composed by an Atharvavedī brāhmaṇa. It is the Chendalur grant of the Chālukya king Sarvalokāśraya.[55] The composition of the epigraph suggests that the poet was of no mean ability. In this connection it may be mentioned that an anonymous Atharvavedī is known to have composed a Telugu grammar and translated the Mahābhārata in the same language in the 13th century.[56] Only one inscription has referred to a family of Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas as Upādhyāyas.[57] That there were in ancient India colleges to teach the Atharvaveda, just like the other Vedas is suggested by an interesting seal from Rajghat. It shows in the centre the personified figure of the Atharvaveda and the legend below reads *Atharvaṇika caraṇa*.[58] Such Caraṇa seals associated with other Vedas have also been found from Rajghat. The Paścimbhāga copper-plate of Śrīcandra records the grant of land in favour of a *maṭha* where the four Vedas were taught by the learned brāhmaṇas of the respective branches.[59]

It should be mentioned in this connection that, though the inscriptions do not throw any light on this, the Atharvavedins were intimately associated with some branches of technical sciences like Āyurveda (medicine), Dhanurveda (military science), and Arthaveda (Polity).

Though the Atharvavedins were quite wide-spread all over India and lands were granted to some of them, the social position of the Atharvavedins, in general, does not appear to be very high. There are some hints to this effect. The Kaira plates of Dadda II are interesting in this respect. In the year 380 he granted a village to the brāhmaṇas of the four Caraṇas—Āśvalāyana Caraṇa of the Rig

Veda, Kāṇva Caraṇa of the Vājasaneya or Yajur Veda, Kauthuma Caraṇa of the Chāndogya or Sāmaveda and Paippalāda Caraṇa of the Atharvaveda.[60] But exactly what happened we do not know, after 5 years, he revoked the old grant and re-issued the charter with some modifications in the list of the donees.[61] The new list omits the Atharvavedins altogether. It is further known from the renewed charter that the brāhmaṇas of the first three caraṇas did not stay in the village, donated by the earlier grant and went back to their native village, wherefrom they had come. It is not unlikely that there was some social stigma attached to the Atharvavedins and the brāhmaṇas of the other three Vedas did not like to stay in the same village with them.

From the western corner of India let us turn to the eastern part of the country. The Sena king Lakshmaṇasena granted land in favour of an Atharvavedī brāhmaṇa who performed the Aindrī-mahāśānti ceremony for him, in time of his distress.[62] But the attitude of the Sena kings in normal time is well attested by a verse in the Deopara praśasti of Vijayasena which says that the fame of the Senas would last ". . . . as long as the Three Vedas whiten (or purify) the minds of the good . . ."[63] This proves clearly that the fourth Veda was not in high esteem.

In this connection mention may be made of a story told in the *Skanda Purāṇa* (Dharmāraṇyakhaṇḍa of Brahmakhaṇḍe Chaps. 33-38). A larger number of brāhmaṇas, so goes the story, were installed in the Dharmāraṇya by Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva at the beginning of creation. But they fled away from the country out of fear of Lohāsura. They were reinstalled in their respective village by Rāma, who renewed their charter through Hanumān. In course of time Kumarapāla, the son-in-law of Āmarāja of Kānyakubja, got the control of this region. He was a follower of Jina-dharma and oppressed the brāhmaṇas by depriving them of their lands, on the pretext that they could not show the *abhijñāna* (i.e., the sealed charter). The king said that if they could show the *abhijñāna* from Hanumān they would be re-installed, but in case of failure they will have to accept the faith of the Jina. The brāhmaṇas belonging to 64 gotras, chose their representatives who would go to Setubandha to bring the abhijñāna. But in the meantime Kumarapāla bribed off a section of them, who now declined to support the move. This section came to be called Chāturvidya. Others met Haṇumān and rest of the story says how they were able to regain their land at last. When they regained their land, the Chāturvidyas also applied for the same; but they were given only a place of residence called *Sukhāvāsa.* The other brāhmaṇas, as distinguished from the Chaturvidyas came to be known as Travidyas and henceforth they stopped all matrimonial relation with the Chāturvidyas.

Āmarāja of this story has been identified by D.C. Sircar with the homonymous king of Kanauj, the son of Yaśovarman.[64] Thus the story told above, cannot be earlier than the latter half of the 8th century A.D. This story gives us a picture of jealousy between the two Brāhmaṇical groups, orthodox and liberal, following the three or the four Vedas. It shows how in a particular locality of Northern India at least the Chaturvedīs were looked down upon by the Trivedīs, who declined to enter into matrimonial relationship with the former group. This degraded social position might have been one of the reasons of the gradual extinction of the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas from India.[65]

II. THE BRĀHMAṆAS OF GAYA

Gaya (in Bihar), 'is situated in the transitional zone between the Gangetic plain in the north and the Chhotā Nagpur plateau in the south.'[66] The story of Gayāsura, as told in the Vāyu-Purāṇa,[67] makes it clear that it was a centre of non-Vedic culture, which in course of time came under the influence of Brāhmaṇism and converted itself into a sacred centre of Paurāṇic Hinduism. Vidyarthi has shown how "in the course of long and continued Brāhmaṇical influence most of the deities have been transformed to Sanskritised names and have been integrated into the generic Hindu fold."[68] In between these two-culture interactions were the Buddhists, Jains and the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas who also had considerable control over the region and must have played an important role in the formation of Gayā-culture.

Gaya was recognised as a *tīrtha* from a much early period, even before the Christian era.[69] It grew up as one of the great centres of ancestor worship. Gayāsura was blessed with the boon that by offering the *piṇda* and performing *Śrāddha* at Gaya, people will transmit their ancestors and also themselves to Brahmaloka. He who would offer worship to the gods here will attain the highest reward after death. So, Gaya has been described as a door to salvation in the Gaya temple inscription of the time of Nayapāla :

Vyanirmmāya samanta-vastu sukhino
Viprān—prajānām patir—yām—
adhyāsta iva-ātmana-aiva parito mūrti
prapañcaṁ dadhat'
Uttuṃgaiḥ—abhra—śubhra—sucibhiḥ
Saudheḥ kṛt— ālaṁkṛtair—mokṣha dvāraṁ—
anargalaṁ jagati sā Śrīmad Gāya gīyate//[70]

At present Gaya is divided into several sacred zones with clusters of sacred spots in each zone. The Vishṇupada temple and the other shrines etc. in the adjoining areas form one group. The Akshayavaṭa and the adjoining sacred spots form another zone. The Pitāmaheśvara is another important zone with some holy places within it. Apart from these three important zones there are others like Rāmaśilā, Pretaśilā and others. The brāhmaṇas of Gaya may broadly be divided into two groups Gayālas and Non-Gayālas. The Gayālas are those brāhmaṇas who perform the Śrāddha ceremonies for the salvation of the departed souls. The Purāṇas narrate that Brahmā created from his mind these officiating priests to perform the sacrifice on the body of Gayāsura and asked them not to take gifts for śrāddha. But they accepted gifts from Yama after śrāddha and was cursed by Brahmā. When they asked for Brahmā's mercy he promised that they would have one means of livelihood in the gifts of devotees who perform śrāddha at Gaya and that though devoid of knowledge and learning, they would be respected and worshipped by all. The Purāṇa, thus gives a very good account of the profession and character of the Gayāla brāhmaṇas in general. There were other brāhmaṇas who did not perform śrāddha, but carried only the worship of deities. The modern Gayāla brāhmaṇas receive their education from the Āchāryas, who live in the Vishṇupada temple and are distinctly different from the Gayālas in behaviour and temperament. The Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas retain their control over the Sun-temples of the locality; while a non-brāhmaṇa priestly class called Dhāmins are guardians of the hill shrines at Rāmaśilā and Pretaśilā, where they perform rites for the propitiation of evil spirits.

The earliest epigraphic document that may be associated with this region and refers to some rituals connected with the dead hails from Kailan in the Patna district and belongs to second century A.D. It is written on the brim of a stone vessel and records that on the 5th day of the 8th fortnight of Summer, in the year 108 when Ārya-Viśākhamitra was the king, the vessel of the worshipful teacher (*Bhagavata Ācārya*), which was intimately associated with his fame and power, was offered as a present (in the name of) the Mahānadaka and the Phalgunadīkā.[71] Thus, the custom of offering some objects in the river in connection with the śrāddha ceremony at Gaya might have been in vogue at that period also. D.C. Sircar finds in this inscription reference to a river called Mahānada, which he identified with the modern Mahanā, a tributary of Phalgu.[72] It is interesting that one of the two rivers, mentioned in the inscription, is a *nada* and the other is a *nadī*. The confluence of a *nada* and a *nadī* was probably considered as very sacred at a time.

The next point to be noted in this inscription is the term Āchārya, which as we have already noted, is still used in Gaya to denote a class of brāhmaṇas. The Āchārya of the present inscription was also a renowned teacher, and the vessel gifted is said to have been connected with his fame and power.

We do not know with which temple the Āchārya of this inscription was connected, but the history of Vishṇupada temple, with which the modern Āchāryas are intimately associated, may be archaeologically traced back as early as the Gupta period. It finds its reference in a terracotta seal from Basarh. It depicts on the upper half a *śrīvatsa* symbol in the centre, a peculiar club, *śaṅkha* and solar disc to right and to left symbol for moon and an ornamental wheel, and the legend below reads : (1) *Śrī Vishṇupadasvāmi Nā-(2) raya [aṇ].*[73] Thus by the Gupta period the Vishṇupada temple was well organised by the brāhmaṇa priests who were in a position to issue seals in the name of the deity and carried on transactions with Vaiśālī, an important centre of Gupta administration.

There is an epigraphic gap about Gaya from the time of the Guptas to the rise of the Pālas. But we possess a very important account of the brāhmaṇas of this period from the itinerary of Hiuen Tsang who found here about 1000 brāhmaṇa families "who were not subject to the king, and were treated by all with reverence."[74] It is interesting that when the curtain is lifted again in the Pāla period we find in Gaya a brāhmaṇa royal family, serving as feudatories of the Pāla overlords. The genealogy of this family, so far as known from inscriptions, is as follows :

Paritosha
Sudraka
Viśvarūpa or Viśvāditya
Yakshapāla.

This family has been described in the inscription as *Mahādvija-rāja vaṁśa.*[75] Mahādvija is usually taken as a degradatory term and so M. Chakravorty takes them as low-class brāhmaṇas[76] and D.C. Sircar likes to identify them with a Gayāla brāhmaṇa family.[77] If this identification is accepted, the inscriptions at our disposal would show how in the chaotic period that prevailed in Bengal after Śaśāṅkā a shrewd Gayāla brāhmaṇa family curved out an independent principality of their own. Members of this family were essentially Gayāla brāhmaṇas and king like Viśvāditya and Yakshapāla spend much money to construct and repair temples of various deities at Gaya.[78] Viśvāditya either constructed or repaired the temples of Janārdana, Gadādhara, Pitāmaheśvara, Gātheśa, Kaṇakeśvara, Ambujabhava, Viśvarūpeśvara, Gaṅgeśa, Śukla-Bhānu, Gṛiddhreśa, Sujanārdaṇa and Vaṭeśa. His son Yakshapāla constructed a temple for housing the gods Maunāditya, Sahasraliṅga, Kamalā, Ardhāṅgina, Nārāyaṇa, two Someśvaras, Phalgunātha, Vijayāditya and Kedāreśvara. A study of the names of these deities makes clear the attitude of the brāhmaṇas of Gaya, who paid at the same time reference to Brahmā, Vishṇu, Śiva, Sūrya, Śakti, not to speak of local deities like Vaṭeśa and Phalgunātha. Their names may be associated with various other pious activities also.

They were also patrons of learning. The Gaya temple inscription of Viśvāditya, belonging to the reign of Nayapāla introduces Gaya as a place where brāhmaṇas spent their time in the study of the Veda and in sacrificial activities.

Vedābhyāsa-parāyaṇa-dvija gaṇa—udgīrṇogra—
pāṭha—kramād—
Uccair—uccarita— dhvani—vyatikarair—
yatnāvadhārya—giraḥ|
Kiñcha-ājasrita—homa—dhūma—patala—dhyānta—
vṛtau sāmpratam
Dharmmo-yatra mahā—bhayāt-iva kāleḥ kālasya
saṁtishṭhate[79]

The Vedic studies were carried on in Gaya is suggested by the Gaya inscription of Govindapāla.[80] It refers to Ḍallaṇa of Vaśishṭha gotra, who was a Dviveda-brāhmaṇa. We do not know definitely whether this Ḍallaṇa was a Gayāla brāhmaṇa or not. But it should be noted that Vaśishṭha is one of the fourteen gotras which are found among the present Gayāla brāhmaṇas. But Ḍallaṇa's intimate association with Gaya is suggested by the fact that his son Vidyādhara was a *Guggulin*, i.e. incense-burner in this temple of Gadādhara situated within the complex of the Vishṇupada temple. The inscription of Yakshapāla was composed by the brāhmaṇa Murāri, who hailed from Āgī-grāma and was a master of logic (*Nyāya-vidyāvidāṁ śreyan*).[81] The science of medicine seems to have been popular in this region. Of the five inscriptions of this royal family three were written by Vaidyas—two by Vajrapāṇi and one by Dharmapāṇi.[82] Another inscription was composed by Vāji-Vaidya Sahadeva, who thus specialized in the science of medicine of horses.[83] The Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas might have contributed something in the popularisation of the medical profession in this locality. We have shown elsewhere that the Śākadvīpī brahmaṇas are still engaged with this profession in various localities of Bihar and U.P. These Vaidyas, as the inscriptions show, were also men of literary acumen.

We do not hear of this brāhmaṇa royal family after the 11th century but Gaya continues to be a living centre of pilgrimage. A fair idea of the administration of various religious establishments at Gaya may be gathered from the inscriptions found from this place. Different sacred complexes were under the supervision of different groups of priests. But when endowments were made for some specific purposes persons of various categories were made to associate themselves with them. Yakshapāla established a *sattra* at Akshayavaṭa, which was probably administered by the Gayāla brāhmaṇas who had control over this sacred zone.[84] But another inscription shows that Vidyādhara, the son of Dviveda brāhmaṇa Ḍallaṇa deposited some money for making provision for feeding brāhmaṇas at the temple of Gadādhara on fifth of Āśvinasudī every year. The money was deposited with Rāghava, Śrībara, Aśuka, Dāmodari, Śrīdhara, Bhika & Devanidhi, who apparently were members of the board of trustee.[85] After the name of Devanidhi there is the word *Dharmin*, which according to D.C. Sircar may be a personal name or an epithet of Devanidhi. Can we take the word *Dharmin* as the original form of Dhāmin, indicating the order of priests practising demonology? Among the witnesses mention have been made of Padma, Viśvarūpa, Narasiṁha, Śrīdhara, Devadhara, Alli and Padmanābha. The last two are said to have been servants of Vishṇu in the temple of Gadādhara. A line of inscription in the margin shows that the annual interest was paid by Rāghava and others in cowrie-shells in presence of the image of the god and Someśvara and Gayā-brāhmaṇa Padmanābha. D.C. Sircar identifies this Padmanābha with the name sake, who was a witness to the gift.[86]

Another earlier Gaya inscription of the time of Nārāyaṇapāla, yr. 7 (9th cent.) refers to one Bhānudeva, son of Bappadeva and Vallabhadevī, grand-son of Sīhadeva and great grandson of Bhaṭṭa Vāmadeva, who dedicated a house at Gaya for the ascetics, on the full moon day of the month of Vaiśākha, which is described as an *āśrama* of the brahmacārins. It was stipulated that only ascetics who were not deformed and were respectable should stay here. The donor requested the brāhmaṇas of Gaya to see that no transgression of this rule was made.[87] Thus the brāhmaṇas of Gaya had direct or indirect control over the administration and organisation of different religious and semi-religious establishments at Gaya.

The source of prosperity of the brāhmaṇas of Gaya are the munificences made to them by the pilgrims coming from different parts of India. Among the pilgrims there were also kings and nobles, who must have made rich gifts in cash and kind to sustain them. Saktipur C.P. of Lakshmaṇasena says that his father Vallālasena made a grant of land to the Gayāla-brāhmaṇa Haridāsasena.[88] So far as epigraphic records are concerned we know also of Gaurī, the wife of Mallikārjuna, the preceptor of the Kakatīya king Pratāparudra, who came to Gaya to perform the *nitya-srāddha* of her husband.[89] Apanna, the son of Āchārya Padmanābha Bhaṭṭopādhyāya, who was apparently a priest of a temple constructed by the Hoyasala king Narasiṁha III came to Gaya and discharged his debts to the gods, to his forefathers and other human beings by constructing a monastery here.[90] The kings of Vijayanagara are also associated with Gaya through inscriptions. Kṛishnadevarāya's court poet Nandi Timmana visited this place.[91] Another Timmananna, who was apparently a priest of the Vijayanagara king came to Gaya and performed Śrāddha on behalf of king Acyuarāya and made his ancestors *Gayā-mukta.*[92]

But modern anthropological research has shown that with the change of economic set up and behavioural pattern of the society the Gayāla brāhmaṇas are facing great problems of existence. Their study shows that these brāhmaṇas of Gaya hold an unique position. In the eyes of the orthodox brāhmaṇas they were degraded and possesses low social status. At the same time they have considerable power and prestige as they lead to the door of salvation. They are liberal in their attitude towards religion and caste. They are strict in extracting money from the pilgrims in lieu of their service rendered to them. They are degraded for their slackness in the observance of sacramental duties, yet the best of the brāhmaṇas have to come to them to make their ancestors reach the Brahmaloka. They are degraded because they have imbibed various non-Vedic elements and it is for this reason that they are to the scholars living examples of the evolution of Indian culture and hold a matchless position in the brāhmanical society.

III. THE ŚĀKADVĪPĪ BRĀHMAṆAS

A distinct community of brāhmaṇas, known as Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas, may be traced in different parts of Northern India. Sherring on the basis of his anthropological survey came to the conclusion that they were indigenous brāhmaṇas of Magadha, a region which was always regarded by the orthodox brāhmaṇas as impure, and consequently these brāhmaṇas were also ranked lower than the other brāhmaṇical tribes.[93] But Indian literature and inscriptions make it clear that these brāhmaṇas, also known as the Magas, entered in India from Iran or Śākadvīpa in different waves. They came in the train of the foreign invaders, particularly the Scytho-Parthians. They were worshippers of the Sun-god and were famous for magic and occult power. Some of their special customs, such as "wearing the girdle called *avyaṅga* (the *aiwyaonghan* of the Avesta and the kusti of the modern Parsees), having beards, eating in silence, the prohibition of touching corpses, using *barsma* (Avestan *baresman*, modern *barsom*) in place of *darbha* (kusa grass) etc., leave no room for doubt that they were ancient Sun-worshippers of Iran."[94] The stories told in some of the Upapurāṇas also go against the theory of indigenous origin of these brāhmaṇas. The Sāmba and Bhaviśya Purāṇas narrate the story of Sāmba, the son of Kṛishṇa by Jāmbavatī, who was cursed by his father to suffer from leprosy. In order to cure his disease Sāmba worshipped the Sun-god and constructed a temple on the bank of the Candrabhāgā (modern Chenab in the Punjab) and brought from Śākadvīpa eighteen families of Magas to officiate as priests in his temple. In the Bhaviśya Purāṇa these Magas have further been called descendants of Jarasabda (or Jaraśata), born of the union of the Sun and Nikshubha, the daughter of sage Rajisvan of Mihira gotra.[95] D.R. Bhandarkar suggested the Jaraśabda or Jaraśata may be the Indianized form of the word Zarathustra.[96] This tradition of the origin of the Maga brāhmaṇas has been echoed in the Govindapur (Nawada sub-division of the Gaya district) stone inscription of Gaṅgādhara (A.D. 1137-38), who belonged to this community. "Hail to the gem of the three worlds, the divine Aruṇa, whose presence sanctifies the milk-ocean encircled Śākadvīpa where the brāhmaṇas are named Magas ! There a race of twice-born (sprang) from the Sun's own body, grazed by the lathe, whom Sāmba himself brought hither. Glorious are they, honoured in the world."[97]

These Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas were variously called as Śuryadvijas, Bhojakas and Magas. An inscription from Hund in the Punjab (A.D. 714-15) records the construction of a *devakula* by the queen Kāmeśvarīdevī. The temple, probably of the Sun-god, was constructed under the supervision of Jayantarāja, the son of Upendra. The inscription was written by Śrī- Bhogika, the son of Śrī-Vihenda. Both these persons have been called Sūryadvija. But the Pañcakula, meaning of which is not clear, was a brāhmaṇa Śri Pillaka by name, who was the son of Śrī-Vīrāditya.[98] These three persons have also been mentioned in another fragmentary inscription found form the same place.[99] The distinction made in these inscriptions between the Sūryadvijas and the usual brāhmaṇas suggests that upto the 8th century A.D. at least the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas were distinguished from other brāhmaṇas.

In the Śamba and Bhaviśya Purāṇas the Magas and Bhojakas have been connected, though some distinctions have been made between them. The Bhojakas are said to have descended from ten of the eighteen families brought by Śāmba, whom he gave in marriage to the Kshatriya Bhoja family.[100] The term Bhojaka is still used in Rajasthan to mean the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas. They are also known as Sevakas. Bhandarkar informs us that most of them are religious dependants of the Osval-Śrāvakas.[101] The Deo-Barnark (Bihar) inscription of Jīvitagupta II names several Bhojakas who in succession acted as priests of the Sun temple at Pātaliputra.[102] H.C. Hazra has suggested on the basis of the Upapurāṇas that the Bhojakas were at first regarded as holy brāhmaṇas, but in course of time due to their objectionable activities and matrimonial relations they were degraded, and gradually turned into Devalaka-brāhmaṇas attached to Sun temples. He further says that it is for this reason in Bihar, where the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas have still important hold, do not call themselves Bhojakas, though the term was once very common in this region, as is suggested by the Deo-Barnark inscription.[103]

The term Maga is known not only from literature but also from inscriptions. The Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas were not accepted for a long time by the orthodox Vedic brāhmaṇas. As such our early brāhmaṇical literature are silent about their activities. But the Vishṇu Purāṇa (11.4.69-70) knew the Magas as one of the four castes of Śākadvīpa. The Ghatiyala (Jodhpur) inscription (A.D. 861) refers to a Maga, Mātṛiravi by name.[104] The term is also found, as we have already noted, in the Govindapur inscription of Gaṅgādhara (12th cent. A.D.).[105]

Enthoven while writing on the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas of Western India stated that these Bhojakas or Magas "were originally Shrimali Brāhmaṇs."[106] This ethnographic finding of the association of the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas with the Śrīmāli brāhmaṇas is also corroborated by epigraphic evidence. The fragmentary Hund inscription which referred to the Sūryadvijas Jayantarāja and Bhogika, in another part of the text praised two more individuals belonging to the Kallaṭha-vaṁśa, which had risen to the status (padavī) of Śrīmāli.[107] Due to the fragmentary nature of the inscription we are not in a position to say how these Śrīmālis are connected with the Sūrya dvijas. But the passage leaves no doubt that the Śrīmālis were associated with the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas, if not identical with them. The mention of the name Śrīmāli in an early inscription of 8th century A.D. is of real importance.

Gradually the Śrīmālīs increased their power and the charter of Jaitrasiṁhadeva (A.D. 1290) records the grant of the village Takāri to 26 brāhmaṇas of the Śrīmāli caste.[108] This Takāri is said to have been situated within the jurisdiction of Nandapadra, identified with Nandapura, on the bank of Reva. Brāhmaṇas of the following gotras received the grant.

Gotras	*No. of donees*
1. Kāśyapa	3
2. Gautama	5
3. Parāśara	1
4. Sanaga	4
5. Upamanyu	3
6. Bharadvāja and Bhāradvāja	5
7. Hārīta	1
8. Vatsya	1
9. Śāṇḍilya	1
10. Lavaṁdhāyana	2

It is interesting that among the donees and their fathers there are several persons whose names ended in āditya or ravi. The donees have the prefixes like Trivā (Trivedī), Dube (Dvivedī), Upā (Upādhyāya), Pani (Paṇḍita), and ṭha (ṭhakkura), which are at present common brāhmaṇic cognomens.

In course of their long stay in this country, the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas gradually Indianised themselves and at present entirely resemble the pañcha-Gauḍas in their customs. They adopted Indian names and gotras, made rapprochement with various other sects and groups of people wherever necessary, but still retained their own distinguishing features which earned for them a distinct position in the brāhmaṇical social order.

The Magas referred to in inscriptions have Indian names. But Śrī-Bhogika's father, referred to in the Hund inscription, is named Vihenda, which sounds non-Indian.[109] The Deo Barnark inscription mentions Sūryamitra, Haṁsamitra, Ṛishimitra and Durdharamitra, who were all Bhojakas.[110] It is possible that as Mitra was a name of Sūrya and a variant of the form Mithra, whom they worshipped, they adopted this name-ending, which went very well at the same time with a common Indian surname and brought them closer to the Indian people. This suggestion crops up in our mind because we find that in the Ghatiyala inscription also the Maga associated his name with the Sun-god and is called Mātṛiravi. Varāhamihira, who is supposed to be a Maga also used the word "mihira" for his name ending. The Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇa family of Gaṅgādhara, however, does not show any distinctive feature in the names of their family members,[111] suggesting thereby that they were gradually completely Indianised.

Like Indian names they also adopted Indian gotra names. Bharadvāja was one of the saints who in the Ṛigveda has been intimately associated with the worship of the Sun-god, and the Magas associated themselves with him. In the Govindapur inscription this Bharadvāja has been highly praised and Bharadvāja is at present one of the common gotra-names of the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas. Among the other gotra names, which are not found in inscriptions but are found among the present Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas mention may be made of Śāṇḍilya, Garga, Kāśyapa, Parāśara, Vatsa and Kauṇḍinya.[112] It is noteworthy that all these gotras are very common. If a comparative study is made of these gotras with those of the Atharvavedīs, found from inscriptions, we find that the latter had several uncommon gotra-names, some of which are not even found in the texts on gotras and sound non-Sanskritic. This suggests that the Maga brāhmaṇas coming from outside adopted the common Indian gotra names, while the uncommon gotra-names among the Atharvavedīs may speak of the presence of an element of non-Vedic indigenous priesthood among these brāhmaṇical community.

But what is more interesting is that, though they have the usual eponymous gotras of brāhmaṇas they do not give proper importance to the gotra, as is done by the brāhmaṇas. The Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas are divided into ninety-five puras or local divisions and persons of the same pura do not intermarry even though they have different gotras. So, Risley has remarked : "To abandon the gotra altogether and to substitute for it exogamous divisions based on a wholly different order of facts involves so serious a departure from orthodox usage that one is inclined to doubt whether the Shakadvipi can even have been organized on the regular lines."[113]

It is however, not unlikely that the Magas had some sort of relationship with the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas because, they had some common elements, e.g. worship of sun and fire, use of magic and charm, knowledge of medicinal herbs etc. In fact, the Āṅgirasas and the Atharvans have been associated with the Sun cult in the Brahma-Purāṇa. The priests of the famous Sun temple at Konarak are said to have been Āṅgirasa brāhmaṇas. "Of the four Vedas only Āṅgirasa is now-a-days accepted by the Saura Brāhmaṇa and their daily duties are performed according to the rules laid down in it."[114] The association of the Magas with the Atharvavedins is clear from the statement of the Bhavisya Purāṇa (I. 106.10) where it states that all the good fruits which can be found by the followers of the first three Vedas are enjoyed by the Atharvas and Atharvāṇgiras from their worship of the Sun-god. In Gujarat region they might have some relations with the Nāgara brāhmaṇas, a considerable section of whom were Atharvavedins and were worshippers of Śiva. The Nāgara-khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa which mainly deals with the holy spots of Hāṭakeśvara Śiva, worshipped by the Nāgara brāhmaṇas, also refer to the three important places associated with the Sun-cult of the Magian type and narrates the story of installation of these three Sun-gods at Hāṭakeśvara.[115] The association of some of the Nāgara brāhmaṇas with the Sun-cult is suggested by the story of Dvija Chaṇḍaśarmā narrated in the same khaṇḍa of the Purāṇa in 163-4 adhyāyas.

The three places associated with the Sun-god were Mulasthāna (Multan in the Punjab), Kālapriya or Mahākāla (Ujjain in M.P.) and Koṇākoṇa (Konarak in Orissa). Of these Kālapriya on Mahākāla is also and even more famous for the temple of Śiva. The fragmentary Hund inscription suggests that in the Punjab region the Sun-worshippers made a rapprochement with the Śaivas. This inscription was issued by king Anantadeva. Though it is of fragmentary nature, it is suggested that in verse number four there is praise of Śiva.[116] In other respects the inscription is similar to the other Hund inscription which records the construction of a devakula by queen Kāmeśvarīdevī under the supervision of the Sūryadvija Jayantarāja.[117] This reminds us of the Nirmand copper-plate of Samudrasena (6th cent A.D.) which records the allotment of a village to a body of brāhmaṇas, who studied the Atharvaveda, for the purpose of the maintenance of the Śiva temple, installed under the name Mihireśvara by Samudrasena's mother Mihiralakshmī.[118] The name of the queen mother shows Magian influence, but her belief in Śaivism hints at close contacts of the Magas and the Śaivas. In Eastern India also the Magas had intimate association with Śaivism. The Govindapur inscription says about Monaratha, Gangadhara's father, that "his mind was purified by the most sacred texts of the Śaiva doctrine" and that he offered oblations in fire thrice a day "at the worship of the moon crested god."[119]

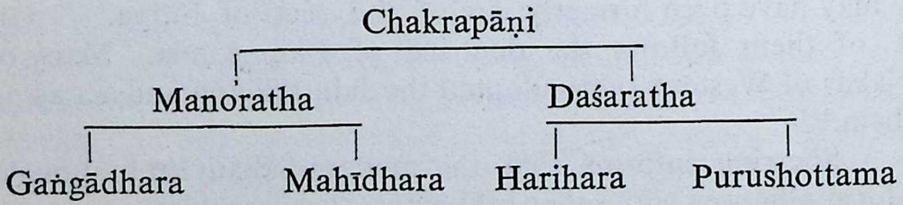
The association of the Magas with the worshippers of the Sun-god and of Vishṇu is quite obvious and need no detailed discussion. In fact the Govindapur inscription issued by a Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇa, proud of his origin, starts with invocation to Vishṇu and not to Sun. It is interesting to note here that Martin after a survey of Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas of Bihar has informed : "None of them now, whatever they may have been formerly, are of the sect of Sūrya."[120] Greater part of them follows the doctrine of Ramananda. Many of the Bhojakas of Western India adopted the Jain religion and act as priests to them.[121]

Sherring informs that the modern Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas do not form alliances with other brāhmaṇas, but freely intermarry among themselves.[122] We have some evidence of matrimonial relationship of the Magas in the mediaeval period (12th cent.) from the Govindapur inscription.[123] Gaṇgādhara, the issuer of this inscription is known to have married the charming Pāsaladevī, the daughter of Jayapāṇi, who had the title Adhikārika, and was a friend of the king of Gauḍa. Gaṅgādhara's father Manoratha married the daughter of one Devaśarman, who was a stainless councllor of the prince of Ghauḍī(?).

It is nowhere specifically mentioned that Jayapāṇi and Devaśarman were also Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas. But as usually marriages take place within a community we may take them also as Magas and conclude that they formed as important a community in Bengal as it was in Bihar. If they were not Magas that also would show that the Magas held very important position at that time and entered in matrimonial alliances with other brāhmaṇical groups.

The Magas raised their social status by their calibre in different fields of culture, earned for them royal patronage, which in turn, again, was a source of their importance.

Some of the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas became famous for their erudition and poetic excellences. The two inscriptions found from Hund were written by Śuryadvija Bhogika.[124] Ghatiyala inscription of the Pratihāra king Kakkuka was written by the Maga, Mātṛiravi by name.[125] The Govindapur stone inscription of Gaṅgādhara shows that the members of this family were "fond of the Vedas, devoted to the proper ceremonials, illustrious for their knowledge of the śikshās, well acquainted with the Jyotisha, accurately understanding the nirukta, proficient in the rule of metrics, famous for their progress in grammar."[126] In short, they were devoted to the study of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas. From this inscription the following genealogy can be obtained.



In the anthology *Saduktikarṇāmṛita* compiled by Śrīdharadāsa, whose father Batudāsa is known to have lived under Lakshmaṇasena, there are verses written by Chakrapāṇi, Dạśaratha, Gaṅgādhara, Mahīdhara and Purushottama. The number of verses written by each are 4, 4, 2, 1, 1, respectively.[127] If these poets are identical with the persons named in the Govindapur inscription we are for all praise for this Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇa family. It is no small credit that so many persons from a particular family contributed to contemporary literature.

The Magas were famous for magic and occult power. They perhaps knew some medicines which lay at the root of their success in the primary stage, as is suggested by the stories in the Sāmba and Bhavisya Purāṇas. This tradition perhaps continued and as such we still find Āyurvedic physicians among the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas, but this quality is not referred to in any of the inscriptions.

The Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas had definite contribution in the field of jyotisha. In India astronomy was a developed subject as it went hand in hand with sacrificial activities. But astrology was not an honourable subject and gaṇakas were degraded brāhmaṇas. But in course of time, due to the contributions made by the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas like Varāhamihira in the field of both astronomy and astrology, jyotisha including both, became an important subject in the curriculum of study. Bāṇabhaṭṭa has referred to the Bhojaka Tāraka, who was one of the astrologers who studied the horoscope of Harsha at the court of Prabhākaravardhana.[128] This tradition of studying astrology still continues among the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas. In fact in Bengal they are known as Āchāryas, Gaṇakas and Grahavipras because they suggest measures for the propitiation of the planets by studying horoscopes and palms. From Mahisantosh (Dinajpur District, Bangladesh) an image of the Sun-god has been found, which from the pedestal inscription is known to have been constructed during the reign of the Gurjjara-Pratihāra king Mahendrapāla by one Lokanandī, the son of Gaṅgānandī and grandson of Vishṇunandī. At the end of this inscription we get the name of Gaṇaka Visaja, who might have consecrated the image and was a priest thereof.[129] The association of the Gaṇakas with the worship of Sun is also attested by the writing of Śaṅkara, the commentator of Bāṇa's Harshacharita. He writes : *Bhojako ravimarchayitvā pūjakā hi bhūyasā Gaṇakā bhavanti.*[130] The association of the name of Gaṇaka Visaja with the image of the Sun-god lends support to the tradition that the Āchārya brāhmaṇas or Gaṇakas of Bengal were originally the Magas or Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas.

Some of the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas appear to have been experts in architecture. Varāhamihira has dealt at length on various aspects of architectural planning. The Hund inscriptions suggest that the Śuryadvija Jayantarāja, who was a resident of Avanti, was invited in the Punjab, to supervise in the construction of a *devakula* there.[131]

The Magas took for their professions various other jobs. Bhogika of the Hund inscriptions was a Kāyastha or scribe. One of the two sons of Chakrapāṇi, the grandfather of Gāṅgādhara of Govindapur inscription, became the Pratihāra, and the other was the superintendent of the eunuchs. Gaṅgādhara's maternal grandfather Devaśarman was a councillor of prince of Ghauḍī (?) country. His father-in-law Jayapāṇi perhaps served the king of Gauḍa in some capacity and earned the title Adhikārika.[132]

Thus the Śākadvīpī brāhmaṇas contributed in different spheres of cultural activities and made their importance felt in the society. So, they did not die away or submerge among the huge stream of Indian populace but could maintain their distinctiveness and held honoured position in Indian society, in spite of the fact that the orthodox group of brāhmaṇas had enough reasons to degrade them.

Reference

1. *SBE*, XXV, pp. 482-83.
2. *Ibid.*, XIV, p. 144.
3. *Ibid.*, XXV, p. 436.
4. D. Bhattacharya—*Paippalāda Saṁhitā of the Atharvaveda*, p. IX.
5. A brāhmaṇa community called Devarukhas are found in Kolaba and Ratnagiri. Wilson suggested that they may be remnants of the Devarshis, a śākhā of the Atharvaveda. They are degraded brāhmaṇas and it is believed that dining with them brings ill luck.
   Cf. Enthoven, *Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, I, p. 245.
6. A Dogara Sastri ed. *Charaṇavyūhasūtram*, p. 33.
7. *EI*, XXIX, p. 10 ff; *IB*, III, p. 106 ff.
8. C. Chakravarti—*Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Vaṅgiya Sahitya Parishad*, p. IX.

9. *EI*, XXI, p. 182.
10. *Ibid.*, XXIX, p. 12.
11. *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 152.
12. *Ibid.*, XIV, p. 167; *CII*, IV, p. 57.
13. *IA*, XV, p. 141.
14. *Ibid.*, V, p. 205.
15. *EI*, XIV, p. 167.
16. *JBBRAS*, XXXIV-XXXV, p. 80.
17. *EI*, XXII, p. 172.
18. *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 152.
19. *Ibid.*, XIV, p. 166.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
23. *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 152; *IB*, III, p. 106 ff.
24. *IA*, IV, p. 40.
25. *Ibid.*, VI, p. 21.
26. *EI*, XXVI, p. 152.
27. *JBBRAS*, XXXIV-XXXV, p. 79.
28. *EI*, XXVI, p. 152; *ibid.*, XIV, p. 167.
29. *Ibid.*, XIV, *loc. cit.*
30. *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 139 ff.
31. *Ibid.*, XIV, p. 163 ff.
32. *Loc. cit.*
33. *CII*, IV, p. 57 ff.
34. *EI*, XXII, p. 172.
35. *Ibid.*, XXIX, p. 12.
36. *IA*, IV, p. 38 ff; *EI*, XXI, p. 181 ff.
37. *EI*, XIV, p. 166 ff; *CII*, IV, p. 57 ff; *EI*, XXIX, p. 10 ff; *IB*, III, p. 106 ff.
38. *IA*, XV, p. 141.
39. *JBBRAS*, XVI, pp. 114 ff.
40. *IA*, VI, p. 17.
41. *Ibid.*, XV, p. 141.
42. *CII*, III, p. 286 ff.
43. David N. Lorenzen, *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas*, p. 28.
44. C. Chakravarti, *Tantras : Studies on their Religion and Literature*, pp. 10-14.
45. V.C. Srivastava, *Sun Worship in Ancient India*, p. 384.
46. Kane, *HD*, III, p. 118.
47. *EI*, XV, p. 4.
48. *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 137 ff.

49. *Ibid.*, XXII, p. 167 ff.
50. *Ibid.*, XXIX, p. 10 ff.
51. *IA*, XV, p. 138.
52. *JBBRAS*, XXXIV-XXXV, p. 79.
53. *IB*, III, p. 106 ff.
54. *JASB*, 3rd Series, VIII, pp. 18-20.
55. *EI*, VIII, p. 240.
56. *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 377.
57. *JBBRAS*, XVI, p. 114 ff.
58. *JNSI*, XXVI, p. 215.
59. D.C. Sircar, *Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan*, p. 34.
60. *CII*, IV, p. 57 ff.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 67 ff.
62. *IB*, III, p. 106 ff.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
64. D.C. Sircar, *Stud. Soc. Adm. Anc. Med. Ind.*, pp. 153-156.
65. Mathura is an important centre of the Chaturvedī brāhmāṇas. When we went to Mathura for excavation, I made an enquiry about the Atharvavedī brāhmaṇas. But the local brāhmaṇas of higher social status could not trace the Atharvavedins among themselves. One day while I was sitting in the camp an uneducated labourer with surname Chaube came. I asked him, "Do you know, what is your Veda?" Interestingly enough, the answer was, "Who knows? May be Atharvaveda?"
66. Vidyarthi, *The Sacred Complex in Hindu Gaya*, p. 1.
67. *Vāyū-Purāṇa*, Ch. CV-CVI. See also *Agni Purāṇa*, ch. CXIV-CXVI.
68. Vidyarthi, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
69. *JIH*, XXXII, pp. 283-289.
70. *EI*, XXXVI, p. 80 ff., verse no. 2.
71. *Ibid.*, XXXI, p. 231.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
73. *ASI*, *AR* (1903-04), p. 110.
74. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's travels in India*, p. 111.
75. *EI*, XXXVI, p. 80 ff. verse no. 4.
76. *JASB*, LXIX, p. 191.
77. *EI*, XXXVI, pp. 83-84. Some scholars, however, take Mahādvijas as brāhmaṇas of high quality—See *JASB*, 4th series, VII, p. 8.
78. *EI*, XXXVI, p. 80 ff; *ibid.*, p. 92 ff.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 80 ff., verse no. 2.
80. *Ibid.*, XXXV, pp. 233-239.
81. *Ibid.*, XXXVI, p. 94.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 80 ff; *ibid.*, p. 89 ff.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 80 ff.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 92 ff.
85. *Ibid.*, XXXV, p. 238.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
87. *Ibid.*, XXXV, pp. 227-228.
88. *Ibid.*, XXI, p. 219.
89. *Ibid.*, XXXIII, pp. 103-108.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-112.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-116.
93. Sherring, *Hindu Tribes and Castes*, I, p. 102.
94. *Cul. Her. Ind.*, II, pp. 613-614.
95. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, I, p. 80.
96. *IA*, II, p. 1.
97. *EI*, II, p. 338.
98. *Ibid.*, XXII, pp. 97-98.
99. *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, pp. 94-98.
100. Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
101. *EI*, IX, p. 279.
102. *CII*, III, pp. 213-218.
103. Hazra, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
104. *EI*, IX, p. 281.
105. *Ibid.*, II, p. 333.
106. Enthoven, *Castes and Tribes of Bombay*, I, p. 228.
107. *EI*, XXXVIII, pp. 94-98.
108. *Ibid.*, XXXII, p. 220 ff.
109. *Ibid.*, XXII, pp. 97-98.
110. *CII*, III, pp. 213-218.
111. *EI*, II, p. 333 ff.
112. It may be noted that among these gotras Kāśyapa, Parāśara, Śāṇḍilya and Vatsa are found in the list of gotras of Śrīmāli brāhmaṇas in the charter of Jaitrasiṁhadeva. Cf. *EI*, XXXII, p. 220 ff.
113. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, p. 116.
114. R.K. Arora, *Historical and Cultural data from the Bhavisya Purāṇas*, p. 47.
115. *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Nāgara-Khaṇḍa*, 76 *adhyāya*.
116. *EI*, XXXVIII, pp. 97-98.
117. *Ibid.*, XXII, pp. 97-98.
118. *CII*, III, pp. 286-291.
119. *EI*, II, pp. 339-340.
120. Martin, *Eastern India*, I, p. 152.

121. Enthoven, *loc. cit.*
122. Sherring, *loc. cit.*
123. *EI*, II, pp. 341, 340.
124. *Ibid.*, XXII, p. 97 ff; *ibid.*, XXXVIII, p. 94 ff.
125. *Ibid.*, IX, p. 281.
126. *Ibid.*, II, p. 341.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
128. *Harshacharita*, tr. by Cowell and Thomas, p. 109.
129. *EI*, XXXVII, pp. 204-208.
130. *The Harshacharita*, tr. by P.V. Kane, p. 23.
131. *EI*, XXII, pp. 97-98.
132. *Ibid.*, II, p. 337.

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